TUESDAY
April 11, 2023

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India likely to get below-normal rainfall

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'PM silent on issues that affect millions'

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EC accords AAP national party status

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DATA POINT

Share of pre-hypertensive teenagers rises

There are fewer teenage girls with normal BP

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LAST-BALL FINISH

Pooran, Stoinis shine as LSG pips RCB

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T.N. House resolution asks Centre to set time limit for Governor for clearing Bills

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Monday adopted a resolution moved by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin urging the Union government and the President to immediately issue appropriate instructions to Governor R.N. Ravi to give assent to Bills passed by the Assembly "within a specific period".

Mr. Stalin said he was under compulsion to move a resolution against the Governor for the second time. He reiterated that "unwarranted circumstances" were not created by the government.

Accusing the Governor of functioning with political motives and converting the "Raj Bhavan into a Political Bhavan", he recalled the observation of the Justice Rajamannar Committee that "it is an appropriate time to abolish the post of Governor and the Governor should be a detached figure".

In January, the Assembly had moved a resolution disapproving of the Governor's selective deviation from the prepared text of his customary address to the House.

On April 7, Mr. Ravi, at an interaction with civil services aspirants in the Raj Bhavan, had said, if a Governor withholds assent to a Bill passed by the Assembly, it means the "Bill is dead".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Ravi clears online gambling Bill

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi on Monday granted assent to the re-adopted Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Bill, 2022. CM M.K. Stalin said the assent granted was a "good consequence" of the resolution on the Governor adopted by the Assembly earlier in the day.

Tamilisai okays 3 pending Bills

Hours before the Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a petition by the Telangana government against Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan for creating a "constitutional impasse" by refusing to act on several Bills passed by the State Legislature, Ms. Soundararajan gave her assent for three Bills. » PAGE 5

India's borders are safe, can't be violated: Shah

No one can take even an inch of Indian territory, Home Minister says in Arunachal, days after Beijing's renaming provocation; Chinese Foreign Ministry claims his visit violated its sovereignty

Rahul Karmakar
Kallol Bhattacherjee
GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

No country can take even an inch of Indian territory, Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday during a visit to Arunachal Pradesh, as he launched a village development programme right at the country's easternmost border village.

Taking aim at China just days after Beijing attempted to rename a number of places in the State, Mr. Shah said India's borders were secure and could not be violated, even if the land measured only "the tip of a needle".

The Chinese Foreign Ministry responded sharply to the visit, claiming it violated Chinese territory.

Ground zero: Amit Shah inspecting a border outpost of the ITBP and taking stock of its preparedness on Monday. ANI

"Today, the entire country can sleep peacefully because of the bravery and sacrifices of our ITBP [Indo-Tibetan Border Police] and Army jawans. As ITBP and Army personnel are deployed, nobody can encroach upon our land covered even by the tip of a needle," Mr. Shah said, adding "there can be no compromise with the respect of our Army and borders."

Mr. Shah was addressing a public gathering after unveiling the ₹4,800-crore Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) to be executed in 2,967 villages across 19 districts in four border States, including Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the union territory of Ladakh.

The project cost includes ₹2,500 crore for road connectivity from 2022-23 fiscal to 2025-26. The event was held at Kibithoo in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district, which shares borders with China and Myanmar.

The Home Minister's visit came one week after Beijing said it would "rename" 11 places in the northeastern State, in an attempt to lay claim to the entire State. On Monday, a spokesperson of Beijing's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the visit "violated China's sovereignty".

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NEARBY

Amul is not Nandini's competitor: MD

AHMEDABAD
Amidst the raging controversy over the two dairy giants, Amul's top boss clarified that Amul was not making a foray into Karnataka to compete with local dairy brand, Nandini.
» Page 3

Drills across States test India's COVID-19 preparedness

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India began a two-day COVID-19 preparedness drill on Monday, amid the continuing surge in cases. A senior Health Ministry official said the drill was aimed at reviewing and ensuring proper arrangements for testing and treatment of patients.

Drills were conducted at all major government and private hospitals across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, and Mumbai. Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya visited the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital in Delhi to review the drill there. During the meeting, Dr. Mandaviya said hospitals should ensure quality clinical practices, measures for infection control, hospital management, sanitation processes and patient-centric provisions.

"Huge response was seen nationwide, where Ministers and senior officials reviewed the preparations and capacities of hospitals and facilities," a release issued by the Ministry said.

The Ministry said the spike in cases witnessed recently could be attributed to the newly emerged recombinant coronavirus variant XBB.1.16. India has now reported mutation in this variant and detection of its offshoot subtype – XBB.1.16.1 – of which over 100 cases have been reported in various parts of the country, including Gujarat and Maharashtra.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Crisis-ready: Health workers in personal protective equipment (PPE) take part in a drill to check preparations of COVID-19 facilities at JLNM Hospital in downtown Srinagar on Monday. Similar drills were held in hospitals across the country. NISSAR AHMAD

SC to hear Gujarat plea against sharing of encounters report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said it will hear in detail the Gujarat government's objections to sharing a report filed by a court-appointed committee led by its former judge, Justice H.S. Bedi, who investigated several police encounters that happened in the State during the chief ministerial era of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul listed the case on July 1.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

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Much to write home about this post office: in 3D printed glory, delivered on time with big savings

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

The Postal Department has set social media abuzz after a picture of a building being 3D printed in Cambridge Layout of Bengaluru went viral.

In what is reportedly the country's first-of-its-kind post office building, to accommodate the Ulsoor Bazaar post office, 3D printing technology is being employed to construct the building. While houses and other buildings were previously built before with this technology, it is a first when it comes to post offices.

When one thinks of a construction site, what usually comes to mind is heaps of sand and cement, jelly stones, bricks and concrete mixers and a huge group of people working. However, 3D printers and a handful of skilled technicians dominate this particular construction site, which roughly spans over 1,000 sq.ft. The building design eschews the usual straight lines and boxed structure for a more fluid frame.

Next big thing: 3D concrete printing equipment on the construction site of the new Halasuru post office. K. MURALI KUMAR

"The cement, sand, and a waterproof chemical is added into a churner with measured amounts of water. The mixture then comes out in blocks, which will be laid on top of each other along with iron pillars in between for support," a worker explained.

Depending on the success of this pilot project, the department might plan a few more in the future.

"We have over 400 vacant sites where we want to build post offices. After the construction of this building, we will prepare a report and submit it to the department. Then if they accept this report, more such post offices are to be expected," said S. Rajendra Kumar, Chief Post Master General, Karnataka Circle.

Speaking about the salient features of the 3D printing technology, Mr. Kumar said it saves time and money. "The cost of this building will be 30-40% less than regular low-cost buildings. The building can also be of any shape and not just a square or a rectangle. The building will be completed in almost a month," he said.

The new-tech post office, which is being constructed at a cost of around ₹23 lakh, has garnered a wide range of reactions on social media.

"I have seen this happening while passing through the road. Very good initiative," said Roshan Raikar, a twitter user.

"Wow, what can be a better place to start this with other than Bengaluru?" another user asked.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The additional stake Temasek will buy in Manipal Health

41 In percentage. Singapore's sovereign wealth fund Temasek will buy an additional stake in Manipal Health Enterprises for more than $2 billion, taking its total shareholding to 59% in the hospital chain. The acquisition of the stake is the largest deal in the Indian healthcare sector. PTI

The amount of mutual funds invested in Indian equities in FY23

1.82 In ₹ lakh crore. Mutual funds were invested in Indian equities in FY23 due to strong interest from retail investors and the correction in the market that led to a reasonable valuation. This comes after an investment of ₹1.81 lakh crore in FY22, according to data from SEBI. PTI

The crops damaged in districts of Vidarbha due to unseasonal rain

7,400 In hectares. Crops were damaged due to unseasonal rain in the last two days in five districts of the western Vidarbha region in Maharashtra. The showers affected crops in Amravati, Akola, Yavatmal, Washim and Buldana. PTI

The deal signed by Israel with Greece for anti-tank missiles

400 In million dollars. According to Israel's Defence Ministry, Israel signed a deal to sell Spike anti-tank missiles to Greece, just days after reaching a similar deal with newly-inducted NATO member Finland. The Spike is a guided anti-tank missile. Reuters

Two-wheeler electric sales rise two-and-half fold in India in FY23

8.5 In lakh. There was a rise of two-and-half fold over the previous fiscal. FY23 saw sales of 1.2 lakh low-speed (LS) e-scooters with top speed less than 25 km/hr and 7.26 lakh high-speed electric two-wheelers with top speed more than 25km/hr. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On Finland's journey to join NATO

Why has Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization? What led to Finland's decision of staying neutral during and since the Cold War? What is the Paasikivi line? How has Russia responded to this move by its neighbour? Did the Russia-Ukraine war influence Finland's decision?

EXPLAINER

Rishabh Kachroo

The story so far:

On April 4, 2023, Finland finally became the 31st country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after applying last May. The Finnish president, Sauli Niinistö, marked the event by stating that "the era of military non-alignment in our history has come to an end". The move to join the security alliance was precipitated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year, Finland's historical experience with Moscow, and the changing nature of international geopolitics with a declining Russian influence.

What has been Russia's response?

The Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, responded to Finland joining NATO with "naturally, this forces us to take countermeasures to ensure our own tactical and strategic security". The Russian Foreign Ministry said that while it will respond with "military-technical measures", the specifics of its actions will depend on the terms under which Finland joins NATO. The Ministry deemed the now-defunct policy of non-alignment as a "wise decision" and said that Finland has now "lost its independence". It made clear, in no ambiguous terms, that this decision "will have a negative effect on the bilateral relations between Russia and Finland".

How has Finland's security policy evolved via its neighbour?

Before the First Soviet-Finnish War, Russia sought to establish a buffer zone along its western border as a means of protecting itself because of its history of being invaded by foreign powers through Finland. Lingering tensions from the Russian Revolution and the Finnish Civil War between 1917 and 1918 as well as unresolved issues from the Treaty of Dorpat in 1920 were responsible for the First Soviet-Finnish War.

Choosing sides: Military personnel raise Finland's flag at NATO headquarters in Brussels on April 4. AP

The Second Soviet-Finnish War, which took place between 1941 and 1944 ended with the defeat of Finland. Finland lost territories to the Soviet Union and had to pay war reparations. This, coupled with the independence process in 1917, the civil war between 1918 and 1919, and the Lapland War in 1944 impacted the collective psyche of the Finns. This made Finland pursue a pragmatic security policy which was flexible enough to balance its autonomy with the need for military cooperation with the West. It was careful of not taking overt actions which could be seen as a security threat by Moscow. Finland made concessions to the Soviet Union, one of which was the Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948. This treaty ensured that Finland would remain neutral and would not allow any foreign troops on its soil without permission from Moscow. While this helped Finland boost trade with the Soviet Union, it became heavily dependent on Moscow thereby making it vulnerable to economic and political overtures from the Soviets.

After the Second World War, Paasikivi's line emerged and began to morph into what would eventually become Finland's foreign policy strategy. Named after Juho Kusti Paasikivi, the president of Finland between 1946 and 1956, Paasikivi's line was based on the idea of peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union with neutrality being its cornerstone. It helped Finland navigate complex international relations after the turbulent time of the Second World War.

Why did the security policy change?

Finland's experience during the Cold War shaped its approach to security policy. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it sought to build closer ties with Russia while also pursuing greater integration with Europe. The country has been an active participant in European security initiatives such as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO). At the same time, it has been able to maintain close economic ties with Russia. However, there were tensions between Finland and Russia as a result of the flux in domestic politics in both countries. For instance, Nikita Khrushchev was willing to negotiate with Finland and allowed for increased trade and cultural exchange between the two countries, despite the 1950s seeing Finland side with the West when the Soviet Union called for a boycott of the 1956 Summer Olympics in Australia.

Could there have been an alternative to joining NATO?

For Finland, an alternative to joining NATO could have been to develop its own military capabilities and pursue a deeper level of cooperation with other European countries, through arrangements like the CSDP and the NORDEFCO. However, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and a declining Russian influence made the decision for the risk-averse Finns easy.

What lies ahead?

The continuation of the Ukraine invasion, a declining Russian might, and now a confirmed security umbrella by NATO gives the impression that Finland's security concerns are mostly assuaged. The extent to which this new cooperation between the Finns and the NATO countries pan out will dictate Russia's actions, but it seems that Moscow, under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, might wish to further escalate by increasing troop presence along the Russo-Finnish border.

Rishabh Kachroo is a PhD scholar at the department of International Relations and Governance Studies at SNU

THE GIST

- On April 4, 2023, Finland finally became the 31st country to join The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after applying last May.
- The Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, responded to Finland joining NATO with "naturally, this forces us to take countermeasures to ensure our own tactical and strategic security".
- For Finland, an alternative to joining NATO could have been to develop its own military capabilities and pursue a deeper level of cooperation with other European countries, through arrangements like the CSDP and the NORDEFCO.

How have recent weather events affected wheat crop?

Why is the Union govt. insisting that the wheat output would not be affected by the recent rains?

Vikas Vasudeva

The story so far:

The unusual rise in mercury in February this year, followed by an untimely spell of widespread rain accompanied by gusty winds and hails during the month of March in parts of the country's key grain-producing States – Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Gujarat – have left wheat-growing farmers worried as they anticipate a drop in yield (productivity), output (production) and quality.

How will the rains affect wheat crop?

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), fairly widespread rains along with stormy winds between 40-50 kilometers per hour lashed several parts of the major wheat-growing States in the country during March, under the influence of consecutive western disturbances. Rain spells accompanied by winds are not considered to be a good sign for the crop's health if they are close to the ripening and harvesting stage, especially if there are instances of water logging in the fields. Unfortunately, there have been instances of crop flattening in fields, besides water logging, which could be detrimental for the ready-to-harvest wheat crop. Wheat, a key rabi (winter) crop is sown between late October till December; it nears the ripening stage in the month of mid-March, and harvesting of the early sown varieties usually commences by the end of March itself. The IMD data suggests that between March 1 and April 9, large excess rains (40% more rain than normal) were received in several States.

How much output would be affected?

Agriwatch, an agri-commodity research firm, in its latest report has stated that owing to the recent untimely rains, the country's wheat production in the agriculture year 2022-23 is likely to be 102.9 MT which is less than the Union government's estimate of 112 MT. The Centre, however, is optimistic that wheat production would be close to 112 MT on account of an increased acreage (area) of wheat and better yield this season, despite a slight production loss due to recent adverse weather conditions. As per the government, the average wheat acreage this year (2022-23) has been 14,86,240 hectares more in comparison to the last five years (2017-2021) which stood at 30,382,010 hectares.

What are agri-experts saying?

A sizable section of farmers assert that the inclement weather has adversely damaged the standing wheat crop.

Indu Sharma, former director of the Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR), based in Haryana's Karnal, says, "It's not just the untimely rains in March, but the unusually higher temperature in February this year that has also been detrimental for the wheat. Now, after the rains and winds, wherever the crop has flattened, it will be difficult to recover it, eventually hurting the crop's yield. "

Moreover, if the country's wheat production drops below the government estimate it could lead to a hike in prices of wheat and wheat-based products in the domestic market, says Rajesh Paharia Jain, a New Delhi-based trader and wheat exporter. He adds that any decline in wheat production can also lead to a potential foodgrain security issue.

An agriculture domain expert and a former member of the Uttar Pradesh Planning Commission, Sudhir Panwar says if the government asserts that wheat production is not going to be severely impacted due to inclement weather then it means that the policy of wheat purchase would remain the same as that of the last year. "In such a scenario, the private player will purchase wheat on Minimum Support Price (MSP) or with some incentive. The wheat price for the consumer in the domestic market should hardly be impacted as the government's first priority would be to replenish its foodgrain stock. If the production is less, then the possibility of market intervention by the government is also quite bleak as its priority would be to maintain the buffer stock," he says.

THE GIST

- The unusual rise in mercury in February this year, followed by an untimely spell of widespread rain during the month of March in parts of the country's key grain-producing States have left wheat-growing farmers worried as they anticipate a drop in yield.
- The Centre, however, is optimistic that wheat production would be close to 112 MT as estimated on account of an increased acreage (area) of wheat and better yield this season, despite recent adverse weather conditions.
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Finding a landlord okay with animals in the house not easy, say pet parents

As the world celebrates 'International Pet Day' to honour the bond between humans and their pets on April 11, Bengaluru's landlords are well known for their peculiar demands, including the infamous 'no pet rule', that makes finding a suitable home a daunting task for animal lovers

PAVANA J.
BENGALURU

Bengaluru's pet parents face a daunting challenge as landlords in the city continue to deny them a roof over their heads owing to their furry friends. FILE PHOTO

Anna Arawattigi, a young professional who lives in Begur, has five cats and also fostered a stray dog on the street where she lived. "When the rains got really bad in October and November 2022, I created a makeshift home for the dog on my terrace. That's when things got really bad between my landlords and me," she said.

Initially, the landlords started to complain about the dog's fur and barking, and then it was just one reason after another, Ms. Arawattigi claimed. "They asked me to get rid of the dog. I said I needed some time to find him a good home as he was also unwell, but they refused and asked me to leave with the dog," she said.

The landlords used to call her at unreasonable hours to complain about the dog even when it was not causing any problems, she alleged.

Daunting challenge

Bengaluru's pet parents face a daunting challenge as landlords in the city continue to deny them a roof over their heads owing to their furry companions.

As the world celebrates 'International Pet Day' to honour the bond between humans and their pets on April 11, Bengaluru's landlords are well known for their peculiar demands, including the infamous "no pet rule" that makes finding a suitable home a daunting task for animal lovers in the city.

Vivek, a college student living in New BEL Road, also faced similar issues with his landlords. "I moved to Bengaluru right after the second lockdown in 2021. In the first house that I rented, the landlords had no issues with me having a pet. In fact, that was the reason I even moved to that house," he said.

But Mr. Vivek's landlords started having problems over time. "First they started to increase the rent by almost ₹3,000 per month. It was very difficult for me as a student to keep up with it but I paid them extra, as I did not have anywhere else to go with my three cats," he said.

They allegedly started asking him not to let the cats move around the building, "They never dirtied the surroundings or caused any noise. I don't know why they suddenly wanted me to keep them locked in," he said.

He said that he ended up vacating the house after a few weeks owing to failed negotiations.

Handling neighbours

While trying to negotiate with landlords is one problem, they also have to deal with neighbours being a menace to them and their pets.

Esther Benedict, another working professional, said: "When I first moved in, I didn't have pets. But I adopted one later, following which the neighbours created a fuss and the landlord asked me to give away the pets or find another place to live."

After much negotiations, of the four pets, she could only keep two. "One afternoon, I saw an elderly neighbour try to put a walking stick inside my house through the window and hit my dog. When I questioned him, he just ignored me and walked off," she alleged.

Ms. Benedict further alleged that there was a time when someone threw a burning cigarette at the dog while it was inside the house. "Thankfully I arrived on time, before it could harm my dog," she said.

Homeowners' view

While tenants narrate their ordeals, homeowners argue that they have their own reasons not to rent their houses to pet owners.

Rajesh, an owner of a three-storey building near Shantinagar, said: "We as landlords should be worried about how neighbours will react to us having pets in our building. They complain a lot about barking and the commotion caused by dogs".

He also added that many pets tend to dirty the surroundings making it difficult for everyone living there.

R.N. Prasad, a member of the Bengaluru Urban District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), said: "Looking at this from a legal perspective, according to the 2023 Gazette notification, a gated society is also considered as a public place and no one can chase dogs and other pets from there."

No new bylaws

Furthermore, he said that apartments and gated communities cannot make any bylaws regarding people having pets and must abide by the rules and policies set by the Animal Welfare Board, the State Animal Welfare Board, and the District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

After two-month operation, synthetic drugs worth ₹8.5 crore seized

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The South Division police, after a two-month covert operation, cracked an inter-State drug racket and arrested a gang of five Nigerian nationals, and recovered synthetic drugs worth ₹8.5 crore.

Based on a tip-off on the drug racket operating in the city for over the last five years, a team led by DCP (South) P. Krishnakant tracked down the accused and recovered MDMA in crystal form, pink cocaine, and brown sugar in wafer form.

The police said the accused came to the city on student visas and overstayed illegally using contactless means of delivering drugs.

Elaborating on the modus operandi, Mr. Krishnakant said that the accused used precautions to avoid undue attention and used foreign numbers to communicate with clients, and used online payments. The accused would then share the locations of the drugs to the customers after confirming the payment.

A team of officials posing as customers kept in touch, while another team tracked down their movement. After two months of investigation, a team of the V.V. Puram police managed to arrest Lawrence Ezenwoke alias Peter and Chukwunezim Thankgod Onyekachi alias Bright at Jayanagar, when they had come to place the drugs in a park opposite the metro station before sharing the location.

Meanwhile, another team from the Jayanagar police arrested Hasley and his associates Frank alias Sunday and Emmanuel Nazi from another location and recovered the drugs from them.

The accused had been booked under similar cases but continued to peddle drugs after coming out on bail and changing their residential address.

Probe revealed that they sourced the drugs from outside the country through Goa and other ports, Mr. Krishnakant said.

The accused were supplying the drugs through their local network in the State and also transporting them outside, he added.

The seizure, which is one of the biggest in the State so far, has significance in the wake of the upcoming elections.

Police Commissioner C.H. Pratap Reddy praised the efforts of the teams for cracking the case effectively.

'Post-pandemic period sees 5% increase in registration of electric vehicles in Karnataka'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Statistics have shown an increase in the registration of electric vehicles in Karnataka from 2018 onwards, with 1.93 lakh such vehicles being registered so far, mostly in Bengaluru, said Gnanendra Kumar, Additional Commissioner of Transport, Karnataka government.

"Post COVID-19, there has been a 5% increase in the registration of electric vehicles in the State," he said at an EV summit organised by the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) here on Monday.

Era of EVs

The 21st century is the era of electric vehicles owing to global warming and climate change and studies showed that around 40% of environment pollution was due to motor vehicles, he noted.

"Fossil fuel depletion and high costs are leading the transition from motor vehicles to electric vehicles which have close to zero environment and noise pollution,'' he commented.

According to captains of the EV industry, who attended the event, increasing penetration of EVs will bring in an additional market worth $4 billion for component manufactures and a 7x growth for charging infrastructure landscape in India by 2025.

The country is staring at a huge opportunity as the world transitioned into alternative fuel technologies focusing on digitisation, automation, and net zero emissions. Newer opportunities in R&D around EV, hydrogen, and alternative fuel technologies are on the rise as the world moves towards a more sustainable future, they observed.

Kamal Bali, MD Volvo Group India, said: "We are going through an era of profound transformation, and it is one of the most exciting, disruptive, and eventful times for the Indian industry. We are also entering an era of accelerated innovation, where partnership is the new leadership as we make the transition from ICE vehicles to EV mobility."

The EV mobility was more than climate change, sustainability, and environment, and therefore whatever the industry did should be made economically viable and socially inclusive, he added.

S. Devarajan, Senior Vice-President BCIC and Senior Vice-President TVS Motor Company, said that with industry targeting to make the environment better, the next 10 years will witness the growth of alternative fuel technologies.

"Hydrogen is a crucial alternative fuel today and India has the potential to become a global leader in hydrogen technology,'' he anticipated.

India has a huge opportunity in cells and battery packs, fast-charging infrastructure, affordable electric technology in emerging markets, and battery swapping technologies, stated Ashim Sharma, Senior Partner and Group Head, Nomura Research Institute Consulting and Solutions.

Centre of excellence for drone education to come up at Chickballapur

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Aereo, an end-to-end drone solutions startup, has partnered with SJC Institute of Technology to open a centre of excellence in Chickballapur.

This institute will serve as a platform where students learn the fundamentals of drones, drone mapping, GIS, data processing, and a certified remote pilot training course. This institute is the first-of-its-kind for advancing holistic drone education in India alongside fundamental remote pilot training.

The centre will provide exposure to students and help them build a career in India's booming drone industry. The courses will be taught by highly experienced industry experts, said Aereo, which was founded in 2013 in IIT Kanpur.

"This centre of excellence will lay the groundwork for drone education in the country. We are extremely grateful to SJCIT for their collaboration and look forward to providing top-notch drone education to the youth of Karnataka. Lack of high-skilled workforce is a primary bottleneck for the Indian drone industry. By imparting holistic drone education along with remote pilot training, we aim to create thousands of new drone-related jobs and pave the way for R&D in indigenous drone technology," said Vipul Singh, co-founder, and CEO of Aereo.

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NAFED re-invites EoI from the eligible bidders for establishment of cold chain including CA capacity of 5500 MT, pre-conditioning, reefer transport and processing infrastructure each at Kathua, Samba and Hariparigam, Pulwama, Kashmir on Built Operate Transfer (BOT) basis. Those interested may visit NAFED's website http://www.nafed-india.com for further details or contact the undernoted.
Sanjay Kumar Rathi
Manager (Horticulture)
Mobile: 9414025061

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KESHAV Kumar Jha, R/O. Flt 108, Navyaniketan apt, 1st Flr, Mahadevapura, Blr–48, changed my son's name from Tejas Kumar Jha to Tejas Jha, vide affidavit dated 30/03/2023

I, KESHAV Kumar Jha, R/O. Flt 108, Navyaniketan apt, 1st Flr, Mahadevapura, Blr–48, have changed my son's name from Tanush Kumar Jha to Tanush Jha, vide affdvt dtd 30/03/2023

I, INDHU Priya R W/o Naveen Kiran J, # 3a 2nd B Cross OMBR Layout Chikka Banaswadi Bangalore–560043 Have changed my name to INDHU PRIYA KIRAN R for all purposes hereafter. Affidavit 03–04–23 before notary B.Seshagiri.

I, SHILPA Somanathan, M/o Nakshatra Sharan, R/o No.379, 8th Main Road, 6th Cross, MICO Layout, BTM 2nd Stage, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560076, have changed my minor daughter's name from Nakshatra Sharan to Nakshatra Nair vide affidavit dated 24-03-2023 before Notary K.V.Mani, Bengaluru.

HAL pays second interim dividend of ₹502.58 crore

A view of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited corporate office on Cubbon Road.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has paid the second interim dividend of ₹502.58 crore to the Union government for FY 2022-23. The dividend cheque was handed over to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh by C.B. Ananthakrishnan, Director (Finance) & CFO with Addl. Charge of CMD-HAL.

The company had declared the second interim dividend of ₹20 per equity share of ₹10/- each fully paid up (200%) for the FY 2022-23, in addition to the first interim dividend of ₹20 per equity share of ₹10/- each fully paid up.

The total interim dividend paid to the Centre by HAL is ₹1,005.16 crore in FY 2022-23. HAL has been consistently paying higher dividends year after year and believes in creating value for its shareholders, the Defence PSU said.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

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SRI. KI.VA. JAGANNATHAN
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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the General Public that my Client has entered into an Agreement of Sale with **SMT.ANUSUYA, W/o Sri. Ananda B,** residing at No.20, 29th Main Road, Arehalli, Bengaluru -560 061 for purchase of residential Vacant site which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder. Hence, if any person/s has/have any right, title, interest, objection or claim on the below mentioned Schedule Property, they may file their objections with the undersigned along with documentary proof **WITHIN 15 (FIFTEEN) DAYS** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which my Client will proceed to complete the sale transaction as the same is free from all encumbrances/ claims. Any objections received thereafter will not be entertained/ considered.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All the Piece and parcel of Vacant Residential BDA Site bearing **No. 2099,** (in Sy.No.16/1, Kannalli Village) formed by Bangalore Development Authority in 1st Block, Sector-L of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, Bangalore, measuring East to West: 6-00 (Six) Meters and North to South: 9.00 (Nine) Meters **Totally measuring 54-00 square meters** and bounded on the :-

East by : Site No.2100,
West by : Site No.2098
North by : Site No.2076 and
South by : Road

(U.L.SOMAPPA) Advocate & Notary
 # 708/41, Upstairs, Sree Ramanjaneya Road Srinagar, Bangalore-560050.
(M) 94480 50108, 98806 14954
Bangalore Date : 10-04-2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

The public is hereby informed that my client proposes to purchase the Schedule Property from its **owners Sri. Muthyala Mohan Reddy and Sri. Muthyala Narayana Reddy, sons of Sri. Muthyala Rosi Reddy.** The owners represent that the Schedule Property is their self-acquired property, having purchased it through a registered sale deed. From the date of purchase, they are in peaceful possession and enjoyment of the same. Apart from them, there is/are no other person/s having any sort of right/s, title, interest/s or claim/s over the same and they have not either mortgaged, lined or encumbered the Schedule Property or part thereof in any manner. The owners further represent that they have not entered into any sort of registered/unregistered Agreement of Sale, MoU/MoA, GPA/Will, etc., with any third parties regarding conveyance/sale of the Schedule Property. That if, any person/s having objection/s or claim/s for the said purchase of the Schedule Property, he/ she/ they /it may/shall with documentary evidence lodge his/her/their/its claim/s **within Ten (10) days** from the date of publication of this notice with the undersigned, failing which, my client shall proceed to purchase the Schedule Property, as if there is/are no claims over the same.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF immovable property being **Site No.172, New Municipal Khata No.172, PID No.65-27-172, measuring East to West: 12.19 meters and North to South: 9.14 meters, in all measuring 111.42 square meters, together with a residential building consists of stilt, ground, first, second and terrace floors, in the residential layout formed by the Bangalore Development Authority, at BTM 2nd Stage, 1st Phase Extension, Rashtra Kavi Kuvempu Nagar, BBMP Ward No.176-BTM Layout, Bangalore,** and the same is bounded as follows:

East by : Site No.225, **West by** : Road,
North by : Site No.171, **South by** : Site No.173.

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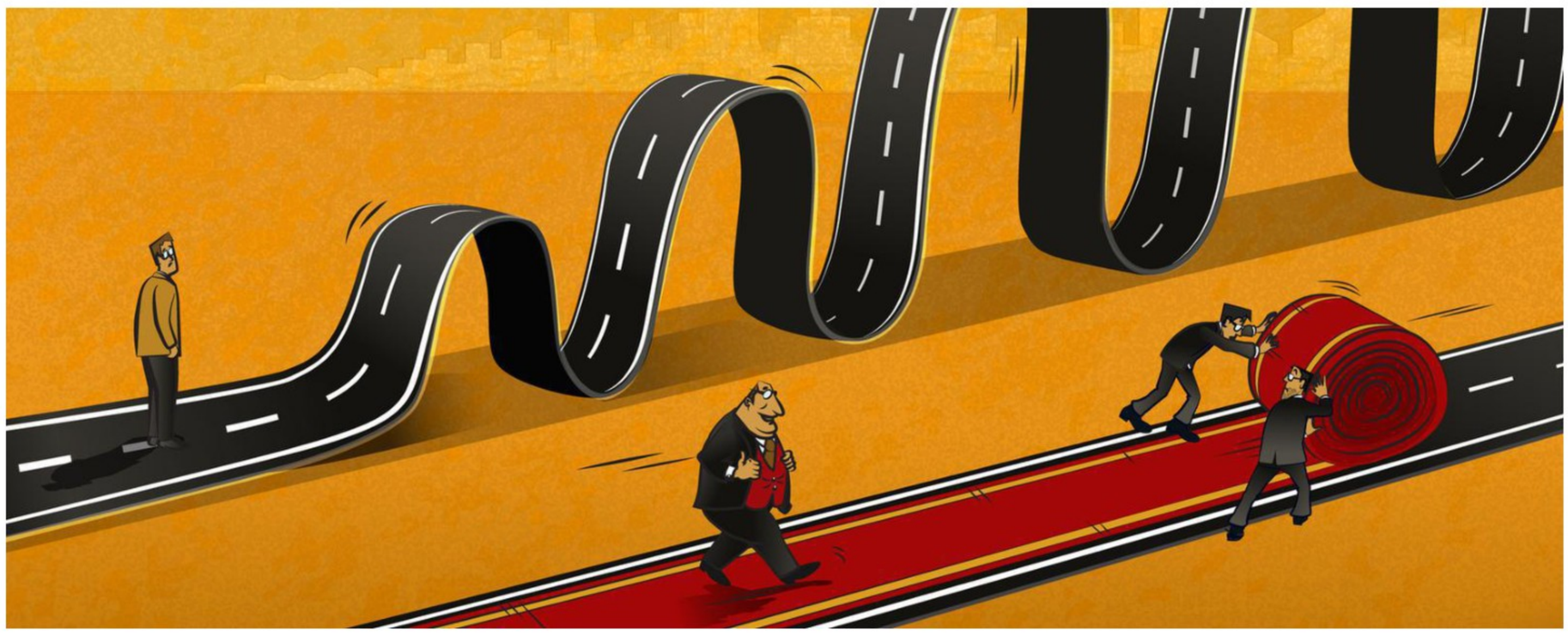
Date: 10.04.2023.
Place: Bengaluru.

M BG-BGE

ABSTRACT



GETTY IMAGES

Do the wealthy influence policy-making more across all forms of democracy?

Ruben B. Mathisen undertakes a study on Norway's democracy, following the same methodology used by Gilens' in the U.S., to assess the extent of policy unresponsiveness in a democracy that has 'gone furthest in reducing economic inequality and restricting money in politics'

G. Sampath

Mathisen, Ruben B., 'Affluence and Influence in a Social Democracy', American Political Science Review (2023)

One of the reasons that a democracy is held to be superior to other forms of governance is the promise it holds out that every citizen will have equal say in policy-making. This would indeed be the case in a perfect democracy where every individual is politically equal. But in the real world, no democracy is perfect, and what has typically been observed is that the affluent enjoy a disproportionately greater say in policy-making compared to the average citizen.

The Gilens model

The most prominent studies on this phenomenon have been conducted by American political scientist Martin Gilens who, in a 2012 study, found that in the U.S., public policy decidedly favoured the preferences of the affluent, at the expense of the poor and the middle classes. American democracy, however, has certain unique features, such as the heavy reliance of political parties on private campaign donations, which might make it far more unresponsive to the non-affluent. Would other democracies, say, the social democratic ones of Western Europe, show a different pattern?

Three different studies inspired by Gilens tried to answer this question, with regard to Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. In all these countries, policy was once again found to be skewed in favour of the preferences of the affluent. In this research paper, Ruben B Mathisen, a political scientist with the University of Bergen, seeks to test Gilens' findings further by assessing the extent of policy unresponsiveness in a democracy that has "gone furthest in reducing economic inequality and restricting money in politics: Norway".

Studying Norwegian democracy

For his study, Mathisen followed the same methodology as Gilens, constructing an original dataset on public opinion and public policy containing 603 specific issues over five decades (1966-2014). For each policy proposal, he "estimated the level of support among different percentiles and matched those data with information on which of the proposals were subsequently adopted by the government." Mathisen's findings were significant. Although in Norway, too, public policy skewed towards the preferences of the affluent, their influence was by no means exclusive, and the opinions of the poor and the middle classes also found expression in government decisions. Secondly, the study revealed that on economic issues, the preferences of both the poor and the rich seemed to matter almost equally; and most interestingly, the opinions of the highly educated were found to be strongly related to policy outcomes regardless of whether they were rich or poor. Clearly, in a social democracy like Norway, the link between money and politics was much weaker than in the U.S.

There are implications and lessons here for anyone interested in deepening democracy in their society. Mathisen advances several reasons why the wealthy in Norway haven't managed to capture policy-making, the way they have in the U.S. The first factor seems to be Norway's universal welfare schemes and high levels of wealth redistribution. 'Universal' welfare measures are ones that benefit every citizen (such as free education and free public healthcare). This is in contrast to 'targeted schemes' like the ones we have in India which only benefit the so-called 'needy' and tend to provoke resentment among the 'non-needy' about how their tax money is being frittered away in 'freebies'. This universality of social benefits has the effect of ensuring their legitimacy and endorsement across classes, including the affluent. As a result, policies favoured by the poor have a "better chance at being maintained or even expanded by the government" and there is often a "self-reinforcing component by which new policy gains for the poor are more easily achieved over time."

The second effect of redistributive welfarism is that Norway has one of the lowest levels of income inequality in the world, which essentially means "less of a resource advantage for the affluent to be used (in whichever way possible) to influence politics." A key aspect related to this phenomenon of being able to convert money power into political influence is political party funding, and here, the contrast between Norway and the U.S. is sharp. While political candidates in the U.S. rely on large donations from individuals and organisations to run their campaigns, parties in Norway get two-thirds of their financing from state subsidies. This shuts down a major channel of influence-buying by the wealthy. Moreover, while television advertising is a huge campaign expense in American elections, political advertising on television is banned in Norway. This not only helps to bring down campaign costs, it also reduces the effect of disparities in spending power between candidates, making the entire campaign process less vulnerable to private wealth. In India, for instance, we have the exact opposite scenario, where electoral bonds empower wealthy private entities to make astronomical donations to political parties with zero transparency in terms of who gave how much money to which party or candidate. Understandably, inequality and policies known to worsen inequality have been gaining ground in India in recent years.

Thirdly, Norway has historically had strong trade unions. They have been able to influence economic and social policy through their close political links with the Norwegian Labor Party, serving "as a countervailing force to the influence of the wealthy". And this is again a contrast to democracies such as the U.S. and India where trade unions are no longer politically powerful as they once were.

The effect of unlimited energy

There is another element that is perhaps unique to Norway and has enabled the state to cater to the concerns of the non-affluent without troubling the affluent – its vast reserves of oil and natural gas. They have made it possible for the government to "maintain generous welfare transfers while imposing lower tax rates than otherwise would be necessary, presumably catering to the preferences of both the poor [subsidies] and the wealthy [low taxes]." Mathisen cites the example of how, in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, unlike other western democracies, the Norwegian government used oil money, rather than spending cuts or tax increases, to fund stimulus packages.

Lastly, the country's political class is not particularly wealthy. The median wealth among Norwegian MPs is zero, according to tax records, which means that it is unlikely for policies to be biased in favour of the rich just because the politicians are themselves rich. There are also other, relatively minor factors that could explain the relatively greater influence of the non-affluent on policy-making: one of them is laws requiring proportionate representation of women in government institutions. Since women on average have lower income than men, their higher levels of representation resulted in greater political influence for women, which, in turn, got translated into greater political influence for lower-income citizens.

The study concludes by pointing out that although policy-making in democracies overall (including Norway), tended to skew in favour of the affluent, thereby violating the basic democratic principle of political equality, the Norway example demonstrated two things: one, in a welfarist social democracy with low inequality, education was a stronger predictor of responsiveness than income; and two, restricting how money can be used to influence elections, and strengthening countervailing forces (such as trade unions) might change the balance of power. Mathisen does add, however, that initiating such changes would be most difficult in precisely those democracies that need them the most, because it is in those countries that the affluent already wield the greatest influence on policy.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian

"I have received a letter from Mr. Aidan Boyack of Anarrtapur. He says: "I am an Englishman who has enjoyed reading your weekly column every Tuesday in *The Hindu* for some years, during which I have never faulted your very lucid replies to readers' questions – until this week! Regretfully, I must join issue on your statement that the phrase "he took ill" was once considered colloquial and dialectal but is now commonly used. Assuming that your answers are intended to convey "English English," I must say that in all my long life in England I have never heard that expression used except in 19th century plays, when a countryman or London Cockney might have used the phrase. Certainly not in current use! A small point in the last line of your column. You quote "She is a connoisseur in modern painting. "In" should read "of." Good wishes for the future of your column."

"I am grateful to Mr. Aidan Boyack for his interest in this column. But I must say that "He took ill" is no longer considered substandard; it is being used now. "He was taken ill" is certainly more commrnon. But 'He took ill' is in use. Perhaps I shouldn't have said 'frequently.' I apologise. "He took ill" was once used without any stigma attached to it. For example, it occurs in the following nursery rhyme:

SOLOMON GRUNDY
Born on a Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday,
Worse on Friday.
Died on Saturday,
Buried on Sunday,
This is the end of
Solomon Grundy.

I have also seen the structure used in respectable British newspapers and magazines. Longman Dictionary of the English Language published in 1984 specifically mentions this use. It is likely that some resist this. This happens all the time in any language. For example, even now there are some who object to the use of 'implement' as a verb. About 50 years ago, anyone who used 'implement' as a verb was considered almost an illiterate! Interesting verbal battles have been fought over this word. In the nineteenth century, a writer said: "To implement" signifying 'to fulfil' is derived from the barbarous jargon of the Scottish Bat!" Again when I was a student I was told that 'needful' shouldn't be used at all. A sentence like 'Please do the needful' was considered wrong. Now 'needful' has found its way into the dictionary. But even now there are a few who object to the use of 'needful.' It was used as early as 1710.1 don't know when it ceased to be standard. Anyway, it is back again on the throne. Regarding the use of 'of' after 'connoisseur,' Mr. Aidan Boyack is right and so am I. Both 'of' and 'in' are acceptable."

Published in The Hindu on April 24, 1987

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

With election bells chiming in Karnataka, here's a quiz on Chief Ministers of the State

Srinivasan Ramani

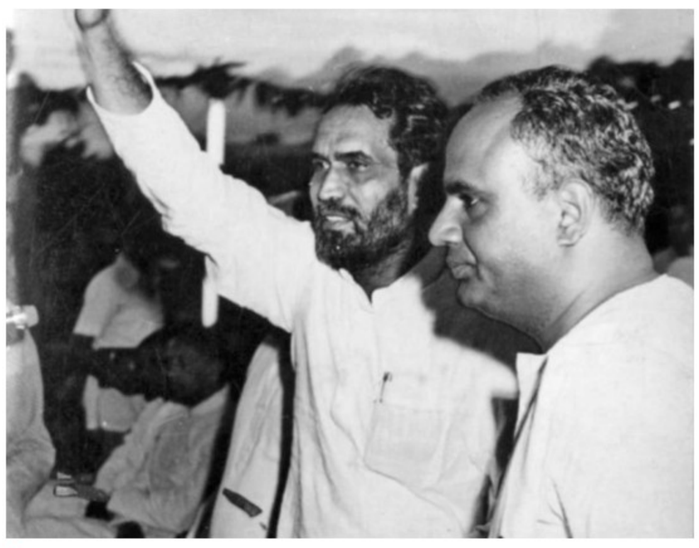
QUESTION 1
The longest serving Chief Minister of the State in terms of number of days in tenure. This person is also credited by political scientists, with utilising state power to put forward the interests of backward castes and communities. Name him.

QUESTION 2
A landmark judgment by the Supreme Court that came out in 1994 which put curbs on the blatant misuse of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, bears this former Chief Minister's name. Name him.

QUESTION 3
A freedom fighter and later, one of the doyens of the Karnataka Unification movement, this former Chief Minister of what was then Mysore State, is also known for being the last president of an undivided Indian National Congress in 1969. Name him.

QUESTION 4
Which former Chief Minister of Karnataka had also served as the acting President of the country for a brief period between 11 to 25 February, 1977?

QUESTION 5
The first non-Congress Chief Minister of the State, he was also a protagonist in a Kannada-language film called *Marana Mrudanga*. Name him.



Visual question:
Two Prime Ministers (one of them a former Chief Minister of Karnataka) are in this picture. Name them. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The reason why April 7 was chosen as World Health Day. **Ans: The WHO was founded in 1948 on April 7**
2. This physician who went on to serve as Mayor, Chief Minister and Governor. **Ans: Dr. B. C. Roy**
3. The popular brand name of this 'diet drug' which works to reduce appetite. **Ans: Ozempic**
4. The definition of nocturnist. **Ans: A doctor who works in any hospital only during nights**
5. The more commonly known name of Sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia. **Ans: Brain Freeze**
6. The Hindi name for this disease literally translates to Black Fever. **Ans: Kala Azar (Hindi) or Visceral leishmaniasis**
Visual: Identify the connection between the three. **Ans: In the middle is Sir Jeremy Farrar who succeeded Soumya Swaminathan as the Chief Scientist at the WHO. Before he took up this role, he was the director of the Wellcome Trust the headquarters of which is marked there on the London street map.**
Early Birds: Sonal Mehta| Ishfaq Hussain| Sumesh Kumar

Word of the day

Telecommuting:
employment at home while communicating with the workplace by phone or fax or modem

Synonym: teleworking

Usage: *Almost all of us were telecommuting during the pandemic*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/teleommutingpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: / ˈtɛl ɪ kə˧myu tɪŋ /

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

108 MP Primary Camera
3x Lossless Zoom

So much detail, it's almost telescopic.

Amul is not Nandini's competitor: MD

'Planned sale in Bengaluru is only through e-commerce and not a distribution network'

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Amul and Nandini have strong collaboration and respect for each other. We are not into competition. Amul's launch of fresh milk and curd (*dahi*) is only for a niche market through e-commerce channels and not through a mass distribution network.

JAYEN MEHTA,
Amul MD

Amidst the raging controversy over the two dairy giants, Amul's top boss clarified that Amul was not making a foray into Karnataka to compete with local dairy brand, Nandini.

He refuted reports and allegations that Amul was going to Karnataka to eat into the market share of Nandini. The issue has taken a political turn in the State that is facing the Assembly elections next month.

"Amul and Nandini have strong collaboration and respect for each other. We are not into competition. Amul's launch of fresh milk and curd (*dahi*) is only for a niche market through e-commerce channels and not through a mass distribution network," Amul MD Jayen Mehta told *The Hindu*.

Recently, a tweet from the country's largest dairy player Amul has generated a political storm in poll-bound Karnataka.

After Amul announced it was making a foray into the Bengaluru market, the Opposition Congress, the JD(S), and other sections of Kannadigas expressed fears that Amul would eat into the market of home-grown Nandini and would pose a threat to its business in the State.

He contended that there was no scope for the controversy since Amul had only announced its decision to sell its fresh milk and curd (*dahi*) through e-commerce channels and not through the mass market distribution network.

"It's a niche and selective foray, not a full-fledged entry as is being made out," he said, adding "there would be no competition since Amul would be selling its milk at ₹54 per litre, while Nandini sells milk at a much cheaper price."

He said that in a few districts of North Karnataka, Amul had started selling its fresh milk through niche foray a few years ago and it did not pose a threat or become a competitor of Nandini in any manner.

"Contrary to the reports of competition, we have a strong collaboration. During COVID-19 period, Amul got ₹200 crore worth of cheese from Nandini," he said. "Moreover, Amul gets ice creams worth ₹100 crore manufactured in the plants of Nandini per year."

Mr. Mehta also added that both Amul and Nandini are owned by the farmers and their commercial collaboration work for the benefits of the farming community.

A demonstration outside an Amul ice cream parlour in Mysuru on Monday. M.A. SRIRAM

Amul-KMF row: Opposition continues tirade, while CM calls it 'misinformation'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

There seems to be no let up in the controversy over Amul entering the Bengaluru market after its announcement brewed a storm last week.

The Opposition Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) continued their tirade against the BJP for attempting to weaken the Karnataka Milk Federation, even as Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai termed their accusations "misinformation" that has caused anxiety among milk producers and the public.

On Monday, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy alleged that the BJP had made an earlier attempt in 2008 to "kill KMF" by allowing Amul for market extension.

He claimed that the then BJP government in Karnataka had allowed an Amul marketing unit on the Jnanabharathi campus of Bangalore University, which had been opposed by the JD(S).

"They have only given life to a 15-year-old conspiracy to trample upon Karnataka. It is an attempt to weaken Karnataka. Then KMF chairman H.D. Revanna had vehemently opposed the move," he said.

Congress MP D.K. Suresh accused the BJP of creating confusion and asked what was the fault with KMF that markets nearly 160 milk and milk products.

"Milk farmers of Karnataka have earned respect, and the BJP is trying the merger the way it did with Karnataka-based banks. When all the attention is on an election, an attempt has been made to intrude into the milk sector. The KMF supports 28 lakh farmers and about 2.5 lakh employees in the cooperative sector. This is just an attempt to privatise the milk sector," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bommai termed the attack on Amul's entry mischievous and misleading, resulting in anxiety among farmers and people.

"The Opposition is trying to politicise the issue. Politics should not go down to this level. Nandini is only doing well in Karnataka but is also going to international markets."

Stating that the KMF is safe, he said: "Neither farmers nor the people should believe in this misinformation campaign".

Higher Education Department warns of action if UUCMS is not implemented

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Higher Education Department on Monday once again announced that stringent action will be taken against universities which fail to implement the Unified University and College Management System (UUCMS). This comes after the department added newer modules like financial planning and monitoring, human resources, and student support system to the software on March 23.

"All universities are hereby ordered to use all the modules of the UUCMS. In case the order is violated, then the officials concerned will be directly responsible and they should also bear the expense for the same," said Nandakumar. B., Undersecretary to Government, Higher Education Department, in a circular passed on Monday.

Even though the system was made mandatory last year, several private colleges and universities had not implemented it as there were many glitches. The students too had opted to join private universities as there were delays in processing the admissions at government colleges through the portal.

However, the department had released the advanced version of the software with newer modules to solve these glitches.

Managements at universities and colleges said that despite the newer version, there are still some glitches within the system, which should be addressed. "It is a good system, no doubt, but it should be made foolproof. The app was not made properly and especially after the integration of the National Education Policy (NEP), it has become more problematic. The technological experts should meet frequently to resolve these glitches. The system should be made more flexible and user friendly," said H. Prakash, Principal, Maharani College.

Other private universities are taking time to implement the UUCMS systematically.

Text & Context
A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (April 11, Tuesday), the following explainer is available:

- On Finland's journey to join NATO
  bit.ly/finlandnato

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

COVID-19 drill begins in hospitals

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following the Centre's directions, Karnataka on Monday started a drill to ensure preparedness of health facilities to meet any eventualities of increase in COVID-19 cases.

After over eight months, COVID-19 cases are on the rise again. While active cases are nearing the 2,000 mark, deaths shot up to 13 in March, and have already touched six this month alone.

The weekly test positivity rate has touched 3.65%, which is higher than the national average. The surge in cases ahead of elections in Karnataka is a matter of concern. However, experts said it is not likely to result in a wave.

The drill at K.C. General Hospital on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Health Commissioner Randeep D. said a preparatory meeting was conducted by the State surveillance unit for the drill on April 6 for all district surveillance units and a briefing was given regarding data collection as per guidelines given by the Centre.

"During the exercise the objective is to ensure operational readiness of the health facilities, to manage COVID-19 cases with focus on availability of healthcare infrastructure in all districts. All government and private health facilities have been instructed to participate," he said.

Data from the health facilities will be collected in a form provided by the Union government and the same data will be entered in the COVID-19 India portal by the district surveillance units.

'Tiger population close to saturation point'

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The tiger population across many habitats may be approaching peak level and may plateau soon and one could not dream of high numbers in future.

This was stated by Rajesh Gopal who was associated with Project Tiger for more than 35 years and was the former head of National Tiger Conservation Authority.

The 2022 tiger enumeration results released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mysuru on Sunday pegged the minimum number of tigers in the county at 3,167 while it was 2,967 in 2018, 2,226 in 2014, 1,706 in 2010 and 1,411 in 2006.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Monday on the sidelines of the India Conservation Conference being held in the city as part of 50 Years of Project Tiger, Mr. Rajesh Gopal said the tiger population was reaching saturation point and many of the tiger reserves were close to attaining their peak carrying capacity.

He said there were also transformations at the landscape level which will have a bearing on the tiger population and hence one could not dream of an exponential increase in future cycles of tiger surveys. Theoretically, it was possible to have more tigers but one has to be rooted in ground reality as with nearly 3,000 tigers there are conflict issues, he added.

Earlier, Mr. Rajesh Gopal, who is currently the Secretary General of Global Tiger Forum, made a presentation on '50 Years of Project Tiger: Challenges and Way Forward' and underlined the imperatives of considering tigers as an indicator of ecosystem well-being in sync with sustainable development, biodiversity and climate goals instead of reducing them to numbers.

He referred to the Amrit Kaal Ka Tiger Vision and said that the tiger should be a mascot of livelihood and sustainable development and umbrella for wildlife and biodiversity conservation so as to secure ecosystem services for perpetuity.

Mr. Rajesh Gopal said the contours of the Amrit Kaal tiger strategy was to bring all potential tiger-bearing forests under the ambit of tiger reserves.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 11
RISE 06:10 SET 18:32
RISE 23:31 SET 10:02

WEDNESDAY, APR. 12
RISE 06:09 SET 18:32
RISE 00:00 SET 11:02

THURSDAY, APR. 13
RISE 06:09 SET 18:32
RISE 00:32 SET 12:05

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	24
Mysuru	35	24
Bengaluru	35	21

Bengaluru Today
33ºC The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34ºC A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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State must pay compensation for acquiring 'phot kharab' land: HC

FROM THE COURT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A mere classification of a portion of agricultural land as "phot kharab", to exempt it from being assessed for land revenue due to its non-arable nature, cannot deprive owners from compensation when the land is acquired for public purposes, said the High Court of Karnataka.

The court also said that the State government will not become owner of a portion of agricultural land, owned by private person, merely because the land is classified as "phot kharab" as land revenue is not collected from such land since it is not be cultivated.

Justice N.S. Sanjay Gowda passed the order while directing quashing the Special Land Acquisition Officer (SLAO) to determine the compensation payable for that portion of the survey number belonging to the petitioners, whose lands were acquired for the Upper Krishna Project back in 1995-96, and classified as "phot kharab", and pay the same to the petitioners within three months.

Earlier round
During an earlier round of litigation, the court had directed the SLAO to consider application foiled by the petitioners, Shivappa and others of Dharwad. However, the SLAO in 2014 rejected their application, stating they are not entitled to compensation for land classified as 'phot kharab' for using portion of their agricultural land as threshing floor.

"The proposition of law that emerges from this discussion is that even in respect of lands which are classified as phot kharab land in a survey number, the title to the phot kharab land would still remain with the holder of the land irrespective of the fact as to whether it has been classified under Rule 21(2)(a) or under Rule 21(2)(b) of the Karnataka Land Revenue Rules, 1966. In short, the State will have no title over that portion of the land which is classified as either "A" Kharab or "B" kharab in a survey number and the entire land including the phot kharab portion would belong to the owner of the survey number," the court observed.

It is to be stated that merely because a portion of the land is exempted from assessment payment of land revenue, that would not result in divesting of the ownership of the holder, and it also would not result in the transfer of the ownership to the State, the court said, while making it clear that "in order for a land to be considered as a land belonging to the State Government, it should primarily be land not owned by an individual."

Three arrested for torturing labourer to death over theft charge

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Ramamurthynagar police on Monday arrested a scrap shop owner and two of his associates on the charge of allegedly detaining a 35-year-old labourer illegally for a week, torturing him before killing him, and dumping his body in a storm-water drain.

The accused have been identified as Prashanth, 34, who owned a *gujari* shop on Nagawara main road and his associates Sheikh Zabiulla, 26, and Shabaz, 28.

The deceased was identified as Saifulla, a resident of D.J. Halli. He owned a horse carriage to transport materials, and would often visit Prashanth for work.

According to the police, Prashanth noticed frequent thefts at his junk shop and kept a watch, before allegedly catching Saifullah red-handed when he visited the shop at night to steal the materials.

The trio locked him in a room and tortured him for a week, as a result of which Saifulla succumbed to his injuries, according to the police.

According to the police, the trio transported the body and dumped it in a storm-water drain near Sadahalli bridge in Kasturinagar.

Body recovered
The next day, the D.J. Halli police recovered the body and registered a case of unnatural death. The police also shared the details of the deceased with other stations and pasted posters to ascertain the identity.

Unable to find his whereabouts, the family approached the police station to file a missing complaint on April 6. At the station, the deceased's brother Fayazullah noticed the poster of Saifullah and identified his brother and shared the details.

In his statement to the police, he also suspected Prashanth's role as Saifullah had discussed with him about Prashanth's harassment a few days before he went missing.

Based on this, the police picked up Prashanth for questioning and later recovered the video of Saifullah being tortured from his phone.

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INBRIEF

Janata Dal (S) holds meeting to finalise manifesto

The Janata Dal (Secular) on Monday held discussions to finalise its manifesto and promises made to people. On Monday, a meeting of manifesto committee headed by chairman and MLC B.M. Farooq was held which discussed inclusion of Pancharatna schemes and social security schemes announced by former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy. The manifesto will be finalised soon and will be released after discussing the issue with party leaders including party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda and party State president C.M. Ibrahim besides Mr. Kumaraswamy, said Mr. Farooq. He said that a detailed discussion took place on many promises that have been made to people till now.

Why has Munirathna not been arrested, ask contractors

The Karnataka State Contractors' Association has sought to know why Horticulture Minister Munirathna -- booked for his alleged hate speech against Christians in March and charged with promoting enmity among people -- was not yet arrested. They have also threatened to proceed legally against the SHO of the station where the case was booked for failing to act against the Minister. The association, in a release, said, "We can readily see that the police machinery in Bengaluru has chosen to treat Mr. Munirathna as above the law."

Deve Gowda to campaign for party in Old Mysore region

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

H.D. Deve Gowda

As the election scene hots up with a month before the State votes in the Assembly polls, nonagenrian Janata Dal (Secular) leader and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda has announced that he will travel to campaign for the party candidates in Old Mysore region and a few districts in North Karnataka.

On any kind of alignment with Congress and BJP, he said that there is no question of going near either Congress or BJP.

In a recorded video message released on Monday, he has said that he will travel in Hassan, Mandya, Chikkamagaluru, Kolar, Chickballapur, Tumakuru, and Ramanagar districts in Old Mysuru region after Tuesday. He has also said that he wishes to canvass for the party in Vijapayura and Raichur districts where he has worked to help the farmers. He recalled his contribution in bringing Krishna water to these districts despite dispute with Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh over sharing of the river water. He said, "Though I have left the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency to my grandson, I have to take care of all these areas."

The election tour schedule is yet to be released by his office.

After 4 days of discussion, BJP yet to release first list of candidates for elections

Chief Minister insists that there is 'no confusion' and says further confabulation is needed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Speculation is rife in BJP circles that the party may ask its senior leaders to contest from an additional constituency where stalwarts from the Opposition are contesting. ANI

While the ongoing consultations in New Delhi on selection of candidates by the ruling BJP entered the fourth day on Monday, the party is yet to release it's first list of candidates. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai told reporters that it would be released on Tuesday or Wednesday.

He insisted there was "no confusion", but there was a need to discuss further. "We are taking more ground reports on the situation with respect to some of the constituencies and also additional information on new candidates. Hence it is taking time," the Chief Minister said.

More than one seat?

Meanwhile, speculations are doing rounds in the BJP circles that the party may ask its senior leaders to contest from an additional constituency where stalwarts from the Opposition parties are contesting. Grapevine has it that the party is considering asking its senior leader K.S. Eshwarappa, from OBC community, to take on Congress leader Siddaramaiah, who has a strong following among the OBC communities, if he chooses to contest from Kolar in addition to Varuna. Similarly, senior leader V. Somanna is being reportedly persuaded to take on Mr. Siddaramaiah from Varuna.

When asked about this speculation, Chief Minister refused to confirm and said, "We are working on what political strategies are to be adopted. I cannot reveal the details now."

On MLAs

To another query on if most of the MLAs would get ticket to contest the Assembly polls again, he only said, "The list will provide answer to all these questions." He reiterated the same when asked if the party had adopted a one-family-one-ticket principle.

The BJP high command is said to have finalised names for 170 to 180 constituencies of the total 224 in the State so far. The arrival of Home Minister Amit Shah, who has gone on a tour in the north eastern region in the latter half the day, is awaited to the national capital on Tuesday to complete the process of candidates' selection.

Earlier in the day, the BJP leaders had two rounds of marathon meetings. While the first one was presided by Mr. Shah in the morning, the second one was held at the residence of party national president J. P. Nadda in the evening. Interestingly, Mr. Nadda is said to have held a one-to-one meeting with veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa and Mr. Bommai apart from the group consultations.

Cautious on rebellion

The BJP leaders are also said to be cautious about the possibility of its disappointed ticket aspirants being wooed by the Opposition Congress or JD(S). The responsibility of pacifying disappointed aspirants has been given to different leaders in different regions.

Congress begins consultation for final 58 seats

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Congress, which is battling dissidence after the release of its second list, started final consultation on Monday for the remaining 58 seats even as fears of further threats of rebellion and desertions is not ruled out after the announcement of third list.

Amid intense lobbying from candidates and leaders backing them, party sources said that a final decision may not be possible for all the remaining seats, and that those that get approved could be part of the third list.

Beyond third list

"With leaders from other parties expected in the final moment, decisions on some seats may not be made yet," sources said, indicating that there could be a fourth list. Before the announcement of second list, party had identified 18 seats where they could expect rebellions, and candidates are yet to be announced from among those seats, sources said

In many constituencies while Congress is yet to get a strong candidate, the party is also expected to wait for the BJP list. "We can expect rebels from the BJP camp and the time will also help us work out caste equations before announcing the list," sources said. Among the many where party is struggling to arrive at consensus are Krishnaraja, Tarikere, Chikkamagaluru, Shiggaon, Honnali, Shikaripur, Maddur, Arkalgud and Pulikeshinagar. Curiosity is also high about the candidate for Kolar Assembly constituency where former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is speculated to contest along with Varuna where he has been named already.

On Monday, Mr. Siddaramaiah, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, AICC general secretary Randeep Surjewala and K.C. Venugopal huddled together in a meeting chaired by AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi to finalise the list of candidates. Party sources said that though there are only two names in most constituencies, the competition is intense between the aspirants. "The exercise has to balance social justice and aspirations of regional leaders." KPCC working president Saleem Ahmed said that the third list could be released any time soon after Monday's meeting, and that candidates have been finalised for most of the seats.

Meanwhile, the Veerashaiva-Lingayat lobby within the Congress is believed to be disappointed with seat distribution in some constituencies in Central, Malnad and Mumbai Karnataka region. Sources said that in many of the constituencies where Lingayats are in good number, Kuruba candidates are also posing a stiff competition.

Kharge is concerned only about bringing party to power: DKS

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

"There has been a complaint in the past that M. Mallikarjun Kharge was denied the Chief Minister's post. However, he now wants the party to come to power," said D.K. Shivakumar, KPCC president, said in Sringeri on Monday.

Answering a journalist's question on speculations that he brought up the name of Mr. Kharge being "in the race for the Chief Minister's post" only because he was opposed to Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah staking claim, Mr. Shivakumar said the former was a senior leader and had not sought the CM's post.

"Mr. Kharge is concerned only about bringing the party to power. There has been a complaint that he was denied the post in the past. Finally, we will all follow the party's decision. I, Mr. Kharge, Mr. Siddaramaiah and others will listen to the party's decision. First we have to bring the party to power," he said. Mr. Shivakumar on Saturday had said he looked forward to work under Mr. Kharge, if the latter becomes the Chief Minister. This had raised eyebrows in political circles.

Mr. Shivakumar said he visited Sringeri to take the blessings of Sharada Peetha. "This peetha blessed Indira Gandhi. I came here to seek her blessings," he said.

Poll work

A Congress delegation comprising party leader Salman Khurshid, Syed Naseer Hussain, MP, and AICC secretary Pranav Jha coming out of the Election Commission after a meeting on the Karnataka Assembly elections, in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

As seizures cross ₹100 crore mark, more Central observers may monitor 'money-powered' polls

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

With money power being flagged off as a major concern in Karnataka, the Election Commission of India is likely to deploy more Central observers to keep an eye on the poll expenditure of political parties and candidates.

Since March 29, when the model code of conduct (MCC) came into force in Karnataka, the Election Commission (EC) has made seizures totalling ₹108.78 crore, including cash, liquor, drugs, and metals. The EC seized cash and articles worth nearly ₹58 crore (between March 9 to 27) even before the election date was announced.

As of April 10, the cumulative seizures of 2023 elections (from March 29 when the elections were announced) is 5.40 times more than the 2018 election seizures. During the corresponding period in 2018, a sum of ₹20.12 crore had been seized. Overall during the 2018 elections, over ₹152 crore had been seized.

"It is likely that one expenditure observer will be deployed in each expenditure sensitive constituency. The EC has identified 81 expenditure sensitive constituencies in the State. In the remaining constituencies, one expenditure observer will be in charge of every two Assembly segments to monitor election expenditure. District Expenditure Monitoring Committees involving State police, Excise, Investigation Directorate of the Income Tax Department, Enforcement Directorate and Financial Intelligence Unit, among others, have been set up to crack down on electoral malpractices," a senior EC official told The Hindu.

"As of Monday, nearly 150 expenditure observers have already been appointed and they will arrive in the State on April 13. More expenditure observers will be posted in the next few days, " he said. In 2018, the ECI had deputed 136 IRS, 156 IAS and 35 IPS officials from other States.

General observers

On March 29 while announcing the election schedule, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had said the Commission will deploy adequate number of IAS officers as General Observers, IPS officials as Police Observers at district and Assembly constituency level.

Besides, the ECI will deploy Special Observers from All India Services and various Central services. Adequate number of Expenditure Observers, who will exclusively monitor the election expenditure of the contesting candidates, will be deployed.

Sources said this time around, the number of such observers is likely to be double the number of officers deployed in 2018.

"More money and liquor seem to be flowing in this election than in the past. IRS officials from the neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, along with IAS and IPS officers from the north Indian States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, will soon land in Karnataka," the official said.

Surveillance teams

The EC has put in place 2,040 flying squads, 2,605 static surveillance teams, 266 video viewing teams, 631 video surveillance teams and 225 accounting teams. Of the total 942 checkposts, 171 have been set up at inter-State borders to track the movement and distribution of goods, and monetary transactions.

Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, said the ECI will take a call on the number of Central observers based on the need, sensitivity and assessment of the ground situation.

Surveillance teams deployed so far

2,040 flying squads, 2,605 static surveillance teams, 266 video-viewing teams, 631 video surveillance teams and 225 accounting teams

Of the total 942 checkposts, 171 have been set up on inter-State borders

District Expenditure Monitoring Committees have been set up

SEIZURES SO FAR

Seizures totalling ₹108.78 crore, including cash, liquor, drugs, and metals have been made from March 29 till date

The EC had seized cash and articles worth nearly ₹58 crore even before the elections were announced (from March 9 to 27)

During the 2018 elections, a total of over ₹152 crore had been seized

Now, row over 'ignoring' Kannada in CRPF exam

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

> The Hindi-centric examination system of the Centre is snatching employment opportunities of those whose mother tongue is not Hindi, and it is imposing Hindi on other linguistic groups.
> **H.D. KUMARASWAMY**
> Former Chief Minister

Coming close on the heels of the controversy of labelling curd in Hindi on KMF's Nandini sachets and the more recent announcement of Amul's entry into Bengaluru market, controversy has broken out over not allowing Kannada in the entrance examination for Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), with Opposition Congress and JD(S) slamming the BJP government at the Centre for ignoring regional languages in favour of Hindi.

The computer-based test is to recruit for 9,212 posts of constables, in which option of languages was in Hindi and English only, providing aspirants no regional language option to write the examination, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said on Monday..

"The Hindi-centric examination system of the Centre is snatching employment opportunities of those whose mother tongue is not Hindi, and it is imposing Hindi on other linguistic groups," he said, adding that it was a "deliberate attempt" to deny non-Hindi speaking aspirants opportunities.

He further said, "It is unfortunate that aspirants from South India are forced to write examination in other languages to find employment. Despite opposition to such moves in the past, the Centre has continued with its policy of Hindi imposition." Urging the Centre to allow Kannada as an option to write CRPF examination, another former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that due to language hurdles, even bright and deserving youngsters could miss opportunities from being selected.

Intervention sought

Seeking intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress Legislative Party leader said that injustice should be set right.

"Language is not knowledge, but only a vehicle to spread knowledge. Despite being knowledgeable, youngsters are failing in examination due to linguistic hurdles. Due to the BJP's language policy, our youngsters are being denied jobs and unemployment is increasing." The Centre is pushing regional languages aside to provide prominence to Hindi, he said.

Telangana Governor gives assent to three pending Bills

Action was taken ahead of Supreme Court hearing on petition against her; court updated on the action taken by Tamilisai Soundararajan on the various Bills, case posted for hearing on April 24

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI

Official sources said, in all 10 Bills were pending with the Governor for over seven months and had not be cleared. FILE PHOTO

Hours before the Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a petition filed by the Telangana government against Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan for creating a "constitutional impasse" by refusing to act on several Bills passed by the State Legislature, Ms. Soundararajan gave her assent to three pending Bills.

According to highly placed sources, the Governor's office sent communication to the Telangana government giving an update on the status of the pending Bills. Official sources said, in all 10 Bills were pending with the Telangana Governor's office for over seven months and had not be cleared despite repeated reminders.

This prompted the Telangana government to approach the Supreme Court in March this year for relief. Government sources expressed their resentment that the Governor chose to give her assent to three Bills that were not significant but chose to reserve two key Bills – The University of Forestry Telangana Bill, 2022 and The Telangana Universities Common Recruitment Board Bill, 2022.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court was given a detailed account of the action taken by Governor on the various Bills sent by the State for her assent.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta shared a communication he got in this regard from the Governor's secretary on April 9, following the top court's directive.

The court recorded that the Governor had already given assent to three pending Bills. Two other Bills, have been reserved by the Governor for "consideration and assent of the President". The court noted that three Bills were under the "active consideration" of the Governor.

The Governor's office stated that certain clarifications were sought by the Governor from the State government with regard to The Telangana Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill 2023. Finally, the Governor's office stated that The Azamabad Industrial Area (Termination and Regulation of Leases) (Amendment) Bill 2022 had "not been submitted as yet by the Law Department to the Governor for consideration and assent".

The case was posted for hearing on April 24.

Police search for accomplice in Kerala train arson case

Mithosh Joseph
KOZHIKODE

The associate helped the accused flee the crime scene on the night of April 2, according to police

The special police team investigating the Kozhikode train arson case is pursuing an accomplice who they believe played a critical role in helping the prime suspect, Shahrukh Saifi, flee the crime scene on the night of April 2.

Police sources said that emerging evidence indicated that this suspected co-conspirator had triggered the train's alarm chain as a diversion, deftly allowing Saifi to dodge capture. Although this associate was said to have accompanied Saifi from Shoranur, his identity remained unknown, they said.

Originally from Shaheen Bagh, Delhi, the 24-year-old Saifi is accused of pouring petrol on passengers in the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express's D1 compartment before setting it on fire as the train left the Elathur station near Kozhikode on April 2. In an attempt to escape, three passengers, including a young child, jumped from the moving train and lost their lives. Nine others sustained burns.

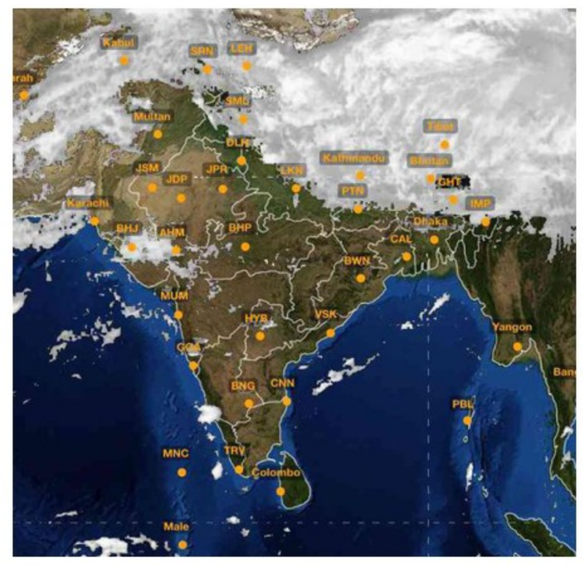
In collaboration with the anti-terror squad, the Kerala Police have also launched a separate investigation at Saifi's hometown. So far, about 25 persons who had contact with Saifi before his trip to Kerala have been questioned.

With Saifi's custody ending on April 18, the police will move a plea seeking extension of his custody.

On Monday, a medical team declared Saifi fit for continued questioning.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over west Rajasthan, central Maharashtra, Marathwada, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	36.7	20.8	Kozhikode	—	36.5	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	41.0	25.6	Kurnool	—	41.1	24.2
Aizawl	—	36.3	14.6	Lucknow	—	36.7	19.2
Allahabad	—	38.4	20.4	Madurai	0.6	37.2	25.3
Bengaluru	—	34.3	21.0	Mangaluru	—	34.0	24.6
Bhopal	—	36.6	20.0	Mumbai	—	36.7	25.8
Bhubaneswar	—	39.7	25.2	Mysuru	—	35.7	24.2
Chandigarh	—	34.9	18.0	New Delhi	—	34.9	15.7
Chennai	—	33.9	25.7	Patna	—	38.8	23.7
Coimbatore	—	35.8	24.8	Port Blair	—	32.8	25.7
Dehradun	—	32.8	15.2	Puducherry	—	34.9	24.2
Gangtok	0.1	21.5	13.3	Pune	6.9	37.1	19.3
Goa	—	34.8	25.4	Raipur	—	38.5	23.0
Guwahati	—	36.6	19.0	Ranchi	—	35.2	22.6
Hubballi	—	37.0	22.0	Shillong	—	24.7	15.9
Hyderabad	—	36.0	22.0	Shimla	—	21.6	10.8
Imphal	—	31.5	16.3	Srinagar	—	24.4	6.6
Jaipur	—	36.0	21.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.0	23.8
Kochi	—	32.6	26.0	Tiruchi	—	37.5	25.4
Kohima	—	26.6	14.3	Vijayawada	—	38.2	23.2
Kolkata	—	37.5	26.8	Visakhapatnam	—	34.1	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.34	105	.24	124	147	
Bengaluru	7	58	.38	29	66	
Chennai	3	85	.92	70	64	
Delhi	.20	68	.34	307	283	
Hyderabad	5	32	.44	104	106	
Kolkata	.26	41	.71	117	106	
Lucknow	.19	148	.36	195	143	
Mumbai	.15	52	.45	208	125	
Pune	119	184	115	150	105	
Visakhapatnam	.17	46	.29	120	129	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 332 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

BJP's Christian outreach triggers debate in Kerala

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The BJP's gambit to engage the Christian community, a crucial voting block in Kerala, by leveraging the soft power of religious occasions has animated the State's political stage.

The BJP is poised to follow up on its Easter Day tack of glad-handing Church leaders by preparing to host parishioners and clergy on Vishu (April 15). The Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) are outwardly cynical about the BJP's overtures to the Christian community. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which controls the BJP, was patently anti-minority and fascist. It would not change its spots.

Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said *Vicharadhara*, authored by RSS ideologue M.S. Golwalkar, categorised Christians as the principal enemy of Hindu nationalism. He dared the BJP to disavow the text.

BJP leader M.T. Ramesh challenged the CPI(M) to repudiate its Liberation Struggle-era stance that Christians were anti-communists responsible for the dismissal of the E.M.S government in 1959. He said *Vichardhara* was written in a different time and a distant political context.

Communist Party of India (CPI) State secretary Kanam Rajendran said the BJP's determined pitch for Christian votes would fall wide off the mark. "People do not shift their political and religious allegiances overnight," he said.

The Congress also outwardly maintained that the much-debated Easter Day meetings would not translate as Christian votes for the BJP. Congress leaders felt the Christians had historical and political reasons to align with the UDF. A hasty shift in allegiance to the BJP or the ruling LDF was unlikely.

The BJP reportedly perceives a Christian disenchantment with the LDF and the UDF's "failure" to address the cash crop crisis. The BJP reckons inwardly that the dividends of the outreach might be slim in 2024. Nevertheless, it aims to threaten the UDF's influence on Christian voters in marginal constituencies from the local body level upwards.

Summer treat

King of the season: A vendor selling mangoes on Eluru road in Vijayawada. Several varieties of mangoes such as Bangenapalli, Chinna Rasalu, Nuzvid and Chakkera Rasalu have flooded the market, with the onset of the summer. G.N. RAO

Chennur's noosed tigress feared to be history

Swathi Vadlamudi
HYDERABAD

Tigress K4 with the snare wire on her lower abdomen captured on camera in Chennur reserve forest back in 2018. FILE PHOTO

Tiger Census, 2022, the quadrennial report on the status of big cats released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, has issued the final word about the possibility of the resident tigress in Chennur forest division being alive.

It mentioned that tigers were locally "extirpated" from Kawal Tiger Reserve and Chennur of Telangana. This assumes significance in light of the fact that the Tiger Census of 2018 had mentioned one tiger in Kawal core area, and one in Chennur Reserve Forest.

Kawal had no resident tigers since its inception, and the one counted four years ago was there only for a brief visit, as noted by the report. However, the tigress in Chennur was a resident one, which is not seen there anymore. Christened K4 by the Forest Department after its birth place Kagaznagar, the tigress had made Chennur forests outside the Kawal Tiger Reserve its home, and survived fabulously for four years despite the noose around her abdominal region. The legendary tigress had got caught in the snare wire as a sub-adult, yet escaped what would have been certain death for any other feline. However, the noose remained around its waist. For a long time, her images were captured by exclusive camera traps installed for her. As she rew in size, the noose was tightening, endangering her.

In 2018, the Telangana Forest Department made Herculean efforts to trap the tigress, to remove the wire. Expert trackers and tranquilising teams were summoned from Maharashtra, and specialised portable Machans and cages were purchased for keeping vigil round the clock. All efforts failed miserably as the feline had proven to be too elusive to fall into the traps, thanks to the memory of getting ensnared in childhood etched in her mind.

Images of the tigress have stopped coming from camera traps for the past two to three years, officials shared. This meant that the animal could have moved elsewhere, or worse, died.

Officials, on the condition of anonymity, admit that death is a more plausible explanation, as the tigress had made Chennur her home, and there was little reason for her to move out.

All govt. schools in A.P. to be ready for children with special needs by 2025

Ramesh Susarla
ANANTAPUR

Digital help: The Consul-General of Spain takes a look at visually challenged students writing their exam without scribe. R.V.S. PRASAD

The Andhra Pradesh government's Samagra Siksha, Kerala-based NGO Chakshumathi and Anantapur-based Rural Development Trust (RDT) have come together to make all the 46,000 government schools in the State inclusive pedagogy-ready by March 2025.

As part of the plan, 400 government teachers have been trained in digital inclusive pedagogy. This programme will be launched across the State on May 8.

Its spadework was done by the RDT-run Inclusive High School in Anantapur, where the concept has been doing wonders for the first batch of six visually challenged girls, who are attending their Class 10 exams without any scribe, but with the help of a digitally converted question paper that supports a screen-reading software.

BRS suspends two leaders citing anti-party activities

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The decision was made after attempts to pacify them failed to break the ice

Cracking the whip against those indulging in anti-party activities, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leadership has suspended former Minister Jupally Krishna Rao and former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. More such actions are expected to be taken in the next few months as Telangana moves closer to the Assembly election.

The disciplinary action against the two leaders discontented with the party leadership was expected for long as they had been vocal against the party and had been exploring opportunities with other parties.

The decision was made after attempts to pacify them, particularly Mr. Krishna Rao, failed to break the ice.

Justifying the action, a senior BRS leader said: "There's need to draw the line somewhere as bickering beyond a level is not good for the party, particularly ahead of Assembly and Parliament elections".

Alliance Air cancels eight flights from Hyderabad

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Flights to Tirupati, Vijayawada, Bengaluru, Mysuru and Chennai were among the disrupted routes on Monday.

As many as eight flights of Alliance Air operating to and from Hyderabad were cancelled on Monday, April 10, 2023 morning. Passengers were in an agitated mood at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport after they were informed that their flights had been cancelled. Flights from Hyderabad to Tirupati, Vijayawada, Bengaluru, Mysuru and Chennai were among the disrupted routes.

Though the airline has not released any official statement about the cancellation, sources from the GMR Hyderabad International Airport say that the flights were cancelled due to operational reasons.

The cancelled flights included to and from journey Hyderabad to Tirupati, Bengaluru and Mysuru. Flight 9I 877 was scheduled to depart from Hyderabad at 6:10 a.m. and arrive in Tirupati at 7:35 a.m.; the same flight (9I 878) would again take off from Tirupati at 8:05 a.m. and land in Hyderabad at 9:30 a.m. Another cancelled flight, 9I 895 was scheduled to depart from Hyderabad at 7:25 a.m. and arrive in Bengaluru at 9:05 a.m., the same (9I 896) would take off from Bengaluru at 9:35 a.m. and land in Hyderabad at 11:15 a.m. Flight 9I 847 to depart from Hyderabad at 10:55 a.m. and arrive in Mysuru at 12:45 a.m. was cancelled as a result of which flight 9I 848 which would take off from Mysuru at 1:15 p.m. and reach Hyderabad at 3:05 p.m. was also cancelled. The other cancelled flights included flight 9I 888 to depart from Hyderabad at 8:15 a.m. and arrive in Vijayawada at 9:15 a.m. and a late night flight 9I 872 scheduled to depart from Chennai at 9:10 p.m. and arrive in Hyderabad at 11:15 p.m..

Right lessons

Wider, transparent consultations are needed in shaping the curriculum

The arbitrary and surreptitious deletion of several portions from various textbooks by the NCERT betrays bad faith and lack of professionalism but, in the prevailing political climate, it is not entirely surprising. The ruling BJP has made the creation of a new knowledge ecosystem across all fields central to its politics. Among the key deletions, which the NCERT describes as rationalisation of syllabus, are references to the dislike of Hindutva extremists for Gandhi, a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh after his assassination, entire chapters on the history of the Mughals, references to the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat, the Naxalite movement, the Emergency and discussions on social movements. History texts have been targeted in particular, and 250 historians from leading Indian and foreign universities have pointed out that those who prepared them through a process of consultation and wide-ranging discussions were all kept in the dark. These changes are not limited to school textbooks. The UGC draft syllabus for bachelor-level history has also been altered, "leading to a plainly prejudiced and irrational perception of our past", according to the Indian History Congress. The NCERT has sought to characterise its failure to be transparent as an "oversight", but remains firm on the revision.

Knowledge expands continuously, and syllabus revision is essential for a robust education system. What is taught to the younger generation is a collective decision of a society in which formal education is a critical part. The values and ethics of the collective are reflected in education, which evolve over time. In India, education has evolved with an aim to promote national integration, critical thinking, and scientific temper. As any society matures, it might be able to process darker episodes of the past with more equanimity. There is also the question of deciding the appropriate levels at which learners are introduced to various levels of knowledge. For all these reasons, textbooks and pedagogy need to be revised periodically. The trouble is when this exercise is carried out in a politically partisan manner, and in disregard of expertise. It turns out to be toxic when strife, not harmony, is promoted through formal education. India's growth and development depends almost entirely on educating its bursting young population with vocational and social skills and shaping youngsters into caring citizens of a pluralistic nation. They should learn history with the aim of not repeating its tragedies in order to build a harmonious future. There should be wider, more transparent consultations in shaping the curriculum at all levels.

Burning bright

India must balance conservation efforts with the rights of forest dwellers

India's tiger population in 2022 was at least 3,167 cats, according to the results of the quadrennial census of the tiger population. The previous such exercise, in 2018, estimated the number to be 2,967. There is a fair chance that the 2022 numbers may be revised upwards as a full analysis of the census numbers remains to be done. Being the 50th year of Project Tiger, it is notable that governments, since 1973, have consistently devoted attention to ensuring that tigers – generally vulnerable to environmental degradation and extinct in several countries – continue to populate India's forests. Being able to ensure an increase in tiger numbers without relying on fenced reserves and by engaging the participation of forest-dwelling communities in conservation are distinct traits of India's big cat conservation approach. However, this does not mean that tiger numbers are ordained to grow in perpetuity. The 'Status of Tiger' report warns that all of India's five main tiger zones, while largely stable, face challenges of deforestation and loss of tiger habitat. The Western Ghats, while one of the most biodiverse spots globally, also hosts some of India's most populous tiger reserves. In 2018, 871 unique tigers were photographed, but this time, only 824 were captured. Over the years, there is an increasing presence of tigers outside protected reserves. In the case of the Western Ghats, however, these numbers are on the decline, with only populations within protected forests stable, the report says.

From nine tiger reserves in 1973 to 53 today, the increase in numbers has not translated to all of these reserves becoming suitable habitats for tigers. Serious conservation efforts are needed to help, for instance, tiger population recovery in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. Wildlife habitats here face various threats that include habitat encroachment, hunting, conflicts with humans, unregulated cattle grazing, excessive harvesting of non-timber forest products, fires, mining, and expanding infrastructure. Experts have said India's reserves, in their present state, ought to be able to sustain populations of up to 4,000, and with expanded efforts at improving fledgling reserves, these numbers can increase. But, care has to be taken to maintain the delicate balance between making the ground fertile for conservation and keeping the rights of forest-dwelling communities intact. Showcasing conservation efforts ought not to come at the expense of ensuring the right to livelihood and dignified living of communities, who often live the closest to these majestic wild creatures. The cheetah, the leopard, the lion and the tiger can co-exist in India only with the right incentives in place for all stakeholders.

An enforced silence cannot solve India's problems

Sonia Gandhi

is the Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party

The people of India have learnt that when it comes to understanding today's situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions speak far louder than his words. His statements – when he is not venting anger on the Opposition or blaming past leaders for today's ills – either ignore the most pressing, vital issues of the day, or are platitudes and verbal gymnastics to gloss over or distract from these issues. His actions, on the other hand, leave little to the imagination on the government's true intentions.

An attack on institutions

Over the past months, we have witnessed the Prime Minister and his government systematically dismantling all three pillars of India's democracy – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, with their actions demonstrating a deep-rooted disdain for democracy and democratic accountability. Consider first recent goings-on in Parliament. In the last session, we saw a government-led strategy to disrupt Parliament and prevent the Opposition from raising issues of grave concern to the country and its people, such as unemployment, inflation and social divisions, and discussing the year's Budget and the Adani scam among other vital issues. Faced with a determined Opposition, the Narendra Modi government resorted to unprecedented measures – expunging speeches, preventing discussion, attacking Members of Parliament and, finally, disqualifying a Congress Member of Parliament at lightning speed. As a result, the Budget of 45 lakh crore of rupees of people's money was passed without any debate. In fact, the Prime Minister was busy inaugurating projects in his constituency with widespread media coverage when the Finance Bill was rammed through the Lok Sabha.

The Narendra Modi government's misuse of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate is well known, with over 95% of political cases filed only against the Opposition parties – and cases against those who join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) miraculously evaporating. The misuse of laws meant for national security against journalists, activists, and reputed think tanks has been unprecedented. The Prime Minister makes grandiose statements about truth and justice even as allegations of financial fraud against the Prime Minister's chosen businessman are ignored, Interpol withdraws a notice against the fugitive, Mehul Choksi, and the convicted rapists of Bilkis Bano are set free and go on to share a stage with BJP leaders.

> The government's deep-rooted disdain for democracy and democratic accountability is disturbing

The systematic effort to undermine the credibility of the judiciary has reached crisis point, with the Union Law Minister calling some retired judges "anti-national", and warning that "they will pay a price". This language is deliberately chosen to misguide people, inflame their passions, and thereby intimidate serving judges.

An onslaught and intimidation

The media's independence has long been compromised by the political intimidation of the government coupled with the financial might of the BJP's friends, with evening debates on news channels emerging as slanging matches to shout down and silence those who question the government. Not satisfied with this, the government has armed itself with legal powers by amending the Information Technology rules to remove legal protections for any news which it dislikes under the label of "fake news". The Supreme Court of India has recently made clear that criticism of the government is not grounds for penal action. Is the government listening? No doubt, an army of lawyers from the BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) stand ready to harass any platform which publishes criticism of the Great Leader.

Enforcing silence cannot solve India's problems. The Prime Minister is silent on legitimate questions on his government's actions which affect the lives of millions. The Finance Minister did not mention unemployment or inflation in her Budget speech – it is as if these problems do not exist. Her silence does not help crores struggling to afford daily commodities such as milk, vegetables, eggs, cooking gas and oil; or youth facing record unemployment rates. After failing on his promise to double the income of farmers by 2022, the Prime Minister has conveniently fallen silent. But their problems of rising costs and unremunerative prices for their crops remain here and now.

The Prime Minister ignores the rising tide of hatred and violence, egged on by BJP and RSS leaders, and has not once called for peace or harmony, or acted to reign in offenders, let alone bring them to justice. Religious festivals seem to have become occasions to intimidate and bully others – a far cry from when they were occasions for joy and celebration. Instead, there is intimidation and discrimination only on account of their religion, food, caste, gender or language.

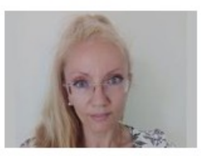
On the live border issue with China, we have the spectacle of the Prime Minister in denial about Chinese infiltration, the government blocking discussion in Parliament, while the External Affairs Minister adopts a defeatist attitude when it comes to China, which is further emboldened in its intransigence.

The days ahead are crucial

Despite the Prime Minister's best efforts, the people of India cannot and will not be silenced. The next few months are a crucial test of our democracy. Our nation is at the crossroads, with the Narendra Modi government bent on misusing every power and elections in several key States. The Congress party will make every effort to take its message directly to the people, as it did in the Bharat Jodo Yatra, and will join hands with all like-minded parties to defend the Constitution of India and its ideals.

Ours is a fight to safeguard the voice of the people. The Congress party understands its solemn duty as the principal Opposition party and stands ready to work with all like-minded parties to fulfil it.

Finland's journey, from neutral to NATO



Tatiana Belousova

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On April 4, 2023, Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), becoming its 31st member. Undoubtedly, this is a significant event, given that NATO security guarantees will extend to this country which shares a 1,340 kilometre border with Russia. This historical moment in NATO's history was full of symbolism, since NATO had clearly scored an additional point against Russia. During the flag-raising ceremony in Brussels, the NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, said, "Finland is safer, and NATO is stronger with Finland as an ally."

As predicted, Russian authorities have signalled possible 'countermeasures' to the alleged 'assault on its security and national interests'. Though they have blamed NATO for aggravating the tensions, this development must be seen as an independent decision of both Finland and Sweden, triggered largely by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Finland is certainly not the first and will not be the last neighbour of Russia to join the alliance. Before Finland's accession, countries such as Norway (1949, and a founding member), Latvia (2004), Estonia (2004), Poland (1999) and Lithuania (2004) were already a part of NATO. In this scenario, Russia needs to learn how to navigate through these growing complexities, which it is partly responsible for.

Complicated past

For nearly 200 years, the 'relationship between Finland and Russia has been a combination of struggle and compromise. In 1809, the Russian Tsar Alexander I defeated Sweden, acquired Finland, and made it an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian empire. In 1917, the collapse of the Tsarist regime and the Bolshevik Revolution paved the way for the full independence of Finland'.

Between the two world wars, the Finns felt 'less threatened by Germany than by Russia, even during the era of the Third Reich. In October 1939, Stalin proposed a revision of the Finnish-Russian border – where Peter the Great's frontier had been laid out in 1721. A month later, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, employing fraudulent pretexts and justifications. The Winter War of 1939-1940 lasted three and a half months; the Finns lost important portions of their territory but retained their independence'.

> Finland's membership only highlights the point that Moscow and Helsinki need to engage in bilateral dialogue to try and understand their security concerns

The war between the (erstwhile) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Finland resumed in 1941, supported by the Finnish alliance with the Third Reich. Finland had been defeated but was able to avert enemy occupation.

Due to the skilful diplomacy and pragmatism of Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Finnish President in 1946-1956, Finland saved itself from the spread of communist ideology. In 1948, the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance was signed between the USSR and Finland, outlining 'Finland's desire to stay outside the conflicts of interests between the great powers'. This came to be known as Finland's 'neutrality'.

What would change

Given the circumstances, the decision made by Finland can be viewed as a rational choice, but its consequences should not be exaggerated unnecessarily. After all, cooperation between Finland and NATO began as early as in 1994 with the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. Finland had the status of an 'Enhanced Opportunity Partner' and contributed in a significant manner to the NATO-led operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Notably, the Finnish system of conscription has generated 'sufficient resources for the army, navy and air force to act effectively in a war situation'. According to the Constitution of Finland, every Finnish citizen is obligated to participate in national defence. In other words, even prior to its NATO's membership, Finland had already been preparing to defend itself against possible aggression.

The main rationale behind Finland's decision has been to receive additional security guarantees from NATO, which are specified in Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty. It 'binds the members together, committing them to protect each other and setting a spirit of solidarity within the alliance'. On April 4, Mr. Stoltenberg once again reiterated that 'we stand together, we protect and defend each other; all for one, and one for all'.

In this sense, Finland's NATO membership can be viewed through the lens of 'conventional deterrence'. Back in 1983, Professor John Mearsheimer described this concept as 'an attempt to persuade an adversary not to initiate a war because the expected costs and risks outweigh the anticipated benefits'.

A cautious way forward

NATO and Russia should search for ways out of the constant cycle of implementing 'measures' and imposing 'countermeasures'. During the last decade, a classic example of 'security dilemma' has been unfolding, whereby Russia and the West have been enhancing their security and creating a more precarious environment altogether.

Given the rising tensions, both Russia and NATO should exercise cautious behaviour *vis-à-vis* the other. Shortly after the alliance welcomed its new member, the Russian government expressed its concerns over 'potential weapons systems and infrastructure, which could be deployed right next to its borders'.

It would be safe to assume that neither Finland nor Russia would wish to see an escalation in their relations. The newly elected centre-right government in Finland should not exaggerate the potential threats from Russia but engage in bilateral dialogue, trying to understand the other's security concerns. There should be at least some NATO members who would be willing to rely more on diplomatic tools and 'lower the temperatures'.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

India's tiger count

The new milestone achieved in conserving India's tiger population needs to be sustained. As poaching is a threat, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change must rope in premier investigative bodies that work with international inputs to curb the illegal wildlife trade. Also, the robust management of national parks is needed to ensure that the big cats can thrive. Man-animal conflicts need to be attended to too.

Manas Agarwal,
New Delhi

The tiger census results released by the Prime Minister show that Project Tiger is out of danger. But still, there is no room for complacency as there are traditional threats such as agricultural and industrial expansion, mining, poaching for skin, dangers from the 'traditional' medicine trade as well as emerging issues such as climate change and the concentration of tigers in few forest pockets leading to limited chances for gene pool enhancement. All these factors need to be looked into by focusing on sustainable coexistence, roping in local people, increasing reserves and getting proper scientific advice in tiger conservation.

R. Srivatsan,
Chennai

That India could have over 3,000 wild tigers is heartening. Tiger conservation must lead to the proper conservation of other species and forests. Factors such as climate change that include flooding must also be taken into account.

Omkar S. Ingavale,
New Delhi

The scientists and the experts conserving Indian wildlife must be credited for their stupendous dedication in achieving the shining figures. Better conservation and sensitising society will enable the sustained growth of tigers even in unprotected areas. There also needs to be increased funding and latest counting methodology techniques.

Jayasekharan V.P.,
Payyanur, Kannur, Kerala

With more big cats now that will require large swathes of contiguous habitat to support their requirements, it remains to be seen how the authorities are able to manage this aspect of conservation.

Michael Jom,
Thiruvananthapuram

Scrubbing out history

That the NCERT is now moving to 'delete' parts of the syllabus that cover the Mughal era, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and other major but politically 'inconvenient' events only highlights the exact motive — a larger plot to establish an ideology under the guise of syllabus simplification. Will our great country slowly move to become a radical state like some of its neighbours? There cannot be an absence of secular values.

J. Radhakrishna Kurup,
Ettumanoor, Kottayam, Kerala

Where is India's history without the immense contributions and influence of the Mughals who made a mark in the fields of administration, art, music, literature, culture, and even splendid architecture?

Sridhar Rao,
Secunderabad

The powers-that-be need to know that history is essential. Students need to have access to a comprehensive swathe of history.

There are many aspects to history and you cannot reduce the subject to a thin slice. When a tourist visits the Red Fort and the Taj Mahal, one of the first things the tourist guide tells you is that these spectacular monuments were built by the Mughals. Are the new censors going to change this?

History is essential in human capital formation.

Ishita Patidar,
Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

Five sixes at Ahmedabad

The five consecutive sixes by Rinku Singh to seal a three-wicket win for Kolkata Knight Riders is representative of the wholesome entertainment that the IPL is. The monstrous clobbering was riveting, spreading joy among youngsters and senior citizens alike. The Indian Premier League is living up to its script.

A.V. Narayanan,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

A crucial six months for India-U.S. ties

Rajesh Mehta

is an international affairs expert focussing on areas like market entry, innovation, geopolitics and public policy

The next six months are going to be crucial for India-U.S. ties. In March, the U.S. finally announced its next Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, after a gap of two years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to head to the U.S. in June, and U.S. President Joe Biden is expected to visit India for the G20 summit later this year. There will also be greater engagement between the two countries on forums such as the G20, Quad, and I2U2.

Divergence and convergence

The presence of Mr. Garcetti, who is known to be a close confidante of Mr. Biden, in Delhi is a sign of things to come. While his appointment signifies the potential for greater partnership, there are also differences in opinion to be overcome in the U.S.-India relationship. The U.S. may want India to change its stance on the Ukraine crisis, while India may seek to persuade the U.S. to have a stronger position against China. While India would seek greater partnership with the U.S., it would also be reluctant to sever its stable relations with Russia. Moscow has just released its foreign policy strategy in which it has identified China and India as its main allies. India is also the president of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a forum that includes China and Russia, until September. On the other hand, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's overtures to India will be watched as it seeks greater participation from Delhi.

There are also strong areas of convergence between India and the U.S.. The India-U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology, launched in 2022, is expected to expand strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between the governments, businesses, and academic institutions of the two countries.

The Indo-Pacific partnership is aimed at promoting security and economic growth, increase trade and investment, and enhance connectivity in the region. The partnership is based on the shared vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region that is respectful of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. The partnership involves a range of initiatives, including joint military exercises, information-sharing on security issues, and collaboration on economic and infrastructure development projects. It also involves cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and maritime security. One of the key objectives of the Indo-Pacific partnership is to counter the growing influence of China in the region. The U.S. and India share concerns about China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea, its expanding military presence in the region, and its efforts to establish economic dominance through its Belt and Road Initiative.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in diversifying supply chains away from China due to geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, and concerns about over-reliance on a single country. India's growing consumer market makes it an attractive destination for U.S. businesses looking to expand their customer base. India has a relatively low-cost labour force and an abundance of skilled workers in sectors such as Information Technology, engineering, and manufacturing. The government has also implemented policies aimed at attracting foreign investment and promoting economic growth. However, there are also challenges to realigning U.S. supply chains to India. Infrastructure, logistics, and regulatory systems in India are not as well developed as those in China. India also has a complex legal and bureaucratic system. To address these challenges, the U.S. and Indian governments have taken steps to promote closer economic ties and facilitate investment. For example, the U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership, launched in 2020, aims to enhance cooperation in areas such as energy security and access, and climate change.

Ups and downs

The India-U.S. relationship has seen ups and downs over time. The nuclear deal, liberalisation of markets, and the outsourcing of Indian techies for U.S. companies are a few key moments of the relationship. Indian Americans are among the most successful immigrants in the U.S. India needs the knowledge, skill and investment of the diaspora to regain its global position.

Previously, the U.S.-aided Green Revolution had transformed India from a shortage economy to one with surplus food. The U.S. has also played an important role in making India an IT superpower. Today, a large number of persons of Indian origin are contributing to Silicon Valley companies.

The U.S. and India are also partners in combating climate change. This involves a wide range of initiatives, including promoting renewable energy, joint research and development projects, and investment in renewable energy infrastructure. The two countries are also aligned on the importance of space technology.

In the past, there was a trust deficit between India and the U.S. It is hoped that trust between the two nations will be enhanced in the coming months. Indians feel that the U.S. has not always lent support to it and has instead pivoted to supporting Pakistan. Moreover, the American pull-out from Afghanistan does not inspire confidence in the U.S. as a trusted partner. The U.S., on the other hand, has been flagging issues related to terrorism, human rights and democracy in India.

Building on their strategic partnership, the two countries can slowly become stronger together. This is the time to take the relationship forward constructively and make it reach its potential as well as look for positive areas of collaboration.

This is the time to take the relationship forward constructively and make it reach its potential

An effort to show a united face

The Rajasthan BJP has tried to address internal tussles and balance caste equations

STATE OF PLAY

Mohammed Iqbal
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In an attempt to balance caste equations and address internal tussles, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Rajasthan has given representation to the politically significant communities in its organisation in a move perceived as a "social engineering exercise".

The recent reshuffle in top posts was primarily aimed at addressing differences among senior leaders. The appointment of Chittorgarh MP C.P. Joshi, a Brahmin, as president seems to be an attempt to influence Brahmin voters ahead of this year's Assembly election. Mr. Joshi has replaced Jat leader Satish Poonia, who served as the State unit chief for three and a half years.

Mr. Joshi, who enjoys the image of being neutral, is expected to play a crucial role in solving the problem of factionalism. When Mr. Poonia was in the saddle, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, who did not get along with him, kept a distance from the party's programmes. She did not feature on BJP hoardings.

Mr. Joshi's appointment was followed by the elevation of Rajput leader Churu MLA Rajendra Rathore as the Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly – a post which was lying vacant since the former Leader of the Opposition, Gulab Chand Kataria, was appointed as Assam Governor.

Amber MLA Mr. Poonia has now been appointed the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Though some Jat leaders described this change as a demotion for Mr. Poonia, the move was largely perceived as a balancing act which gives weightage to all the factions in the party.

The three appointments are expected to consolidate the Brahmin, Rajput and Jat vote banks for the BJP. While significant sections of Brahmins and Jats have been voting for the Congress in Rajasthan in the past, the displeasure of Rajputs was considered a major reason for the BJP's defeat in the 2018 Assembly election.

However, the BJP continues to face the challenge of deciding Ms. Raje's role in the Assembly election. Her supporters have been clamouring for her to be projected as the party's chief ministerial face.

The Central leadership apparently wants to give her new responsibility during the election campaign. The meeting between BJP National General Secretary Arun Singh and Ms. Raje at her residence earlier this month indicated that attempts are being made to mollify her and take advantage of her clout and popularity among the voters during the polls. Though Ms. Raje may not be declared the chief ministerial candidate, she is expected to lead from the front.

Mr. Joshi has promised to take everyone along and avoid any situation that could lead to factionalism. After assuming office, he met the former State unit presidents and senior leaders such as Hari Shankar Bhabhra, Ashok Parnami and Arun Chaturvedi at their residences and released photographs of these meetings on social media.

Meanwhile, farmers have been worried about crop damage following the recent unseasonal rains. During his visit to Chittorgarh, Mr. Joshi used this to the party's advantage by saying that the BJP-led Central government has brought down the cap for compensation for crop damage from 50% of potential crop to 33%, and accused the Congress government of "cheating" farmers, youngsters and common people.

Sources say a Scheduled Tribe leader from Rajasthan may be inducted into the Union Cabinet in an impending reshuffle, which could improve the party's prospects in the Assembly election. Rajya Sabha Member Kirodi Lal Meena, considered an influential tribal leader in eastern Rajasthan, may be appointed a Minister to make inroads in that region, which is a Congress stronghold.

It is clear that the BJP is taking no chances and has carried out big changes eight months prior to the Assembly election to control infighting and address the concerns of different sections of voters. The BJP knows that it will need to show a united and inclusive face by accommodating leaders from marginalised communities.

Meanwhile, the problem of infighting continues to plague the Congress, with former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot accusing Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot of sitting on corruption cases against the previous Raje-led BJP government. Every time tensions between the two camps in the party have flared up, the high command has stepped in to resolve the crisis. But leadership issues remain pending in the Congress.

Share of pre-hypertensive teenagers rises across most States

The decline in teenage girls with normal BP was the sharpest among all the age groups in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Punjab

DATA POINT

Rebecca Rose Varghese & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

In 22 of 28 States, the share of teenage girls (15-19 years) who had normal blood pressure (BP) decreased between 2015-16 and 2019-21, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data. The decrease was more pronounced in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. More importantly, in some States, the decline in the share of teenage girls with normal BP was steeper than the decline among older age groups.

According to the NFHS, BP is considered normal if systolic pressure is lower than 120 mmHg and diastolic pressure is lower than 80 mmHg. Those who had normal BP because they took medicines to control their BP were excluded from the analysis. Jammu and Kashmir was not been included in the analysis as the State was bifurcated between the two NFHS periods. Only data for women were considered as fewer men participated in the NFHS than women.

In Chhattisgarh, in 2015-16, 81.9% of teenage girls had normal BP and 67.1% in 2019-21. This was a decrease of 14.8% points, the highest among all the States. In terms of the degree of decline, Maharashtra followed next (13.3% points between 2015-16 and 2019-21). Telangana was the only other State with a double-digit decline. In only six States – Assam, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland and Manipur – did the share of such teenage girls increase.

Though the decrease in the share of teenage girls who had normal BP was more pronounced in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Telangana, the share was high to begin with in some north-eastern States. In Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, only 63% of teenage girls had normal BP in 2019-21 – the lowest in the country. Notably, the situation was better in the southern States where at least 78% of teenage girls had normal BP.

Overall in India, in 2015-16, 80% of teenage girls had normal BP, which declined to 74% in 2019-21 – a decrease of 6% points. **Chart 1** shows the share of teenage girls who had normal BP in 2019-21.

Chart 2 shows the decrease/increase in the share of teenage girls who had normal BP in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16.

More worryingly, in some States, the decline was sharpest among teenagers. **Table 3** shows the decrease/increase in the share of girls/women who had normal BP in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16 across various age groups. For instance, in Chhattisgarh, the share of teenage girls with normal BP decreased by 14.8% points, the highest among all the age groups in the State. In Chhattisgarh, not only was the decline among teenagers with normal BP the steepest among all the States but also the sharpest among all the age groups within the State. Similarly, the decline in teenage girls with normal BP was sharpest among all the age groups in Maharashtra, Telangana and Punjab.

The absence of normal BP does not necessarily indicate hypertension. If the systolic pressure is in the range of 120-139 mmHg or diastolic pressure is in the range of 80-89 mmHg, it indicates that the person is pre-hypertensive. **Chart 4** shows the decrease/increase in the share of teenage girls who were pre-hypertensive in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16. In all the 22 States in which the share of teenage girls who had normal BP decreased, the share of pre-hypertensive girls increased. The increase in the share of pre-hypertensive girls was more pronounced in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Rajasthan than in others. However, only 2.4% of teenage girls were hypertensive (systolic pressure >139 mmHg or diastolic pressure >89 mmHg) in India.

A serious concern

The table and charts are based on data collated from the National Family Health Survey- 5 (2019-21) and NFHS-4 (2015-16). Only data for women were considered as fewer men participated in the NFHS than women

Chart 1 | The chart shows the share of teenage girls who had normal BP in 2019-21

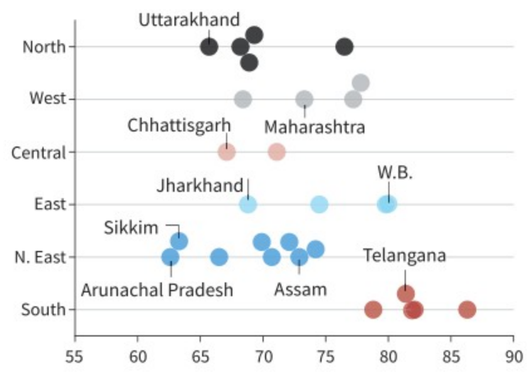


Chart 2 | Change in the share of teenage girls who had normal BP in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16 (in % points)

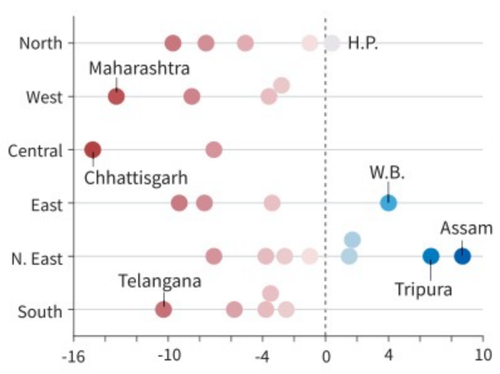
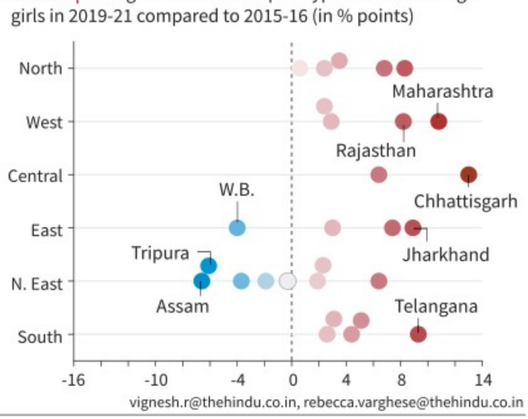


Table 3 | The table shows the change in the share of girls/women with normal BP in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16 (in % points)

Age-groups→	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Punjab	-5.1	-3.3	0.7	-1	-0.5	-4	-4.3
Odisha	-7.7	-5.2	-5.7	-7.8	-7.6	-8.9	-7.1
Jharkhand	-9.3	-8.9	-8.2	-10	-9	-9.5	-9.4
Uttarakhand	-9.7	-7.9	-4.7	-8.7	-8.9	-12.9	-6.5
Telangana	-10.3	-7.3	-4.7	-8.9	-6.8	-6.4	-7.7
Maharashtra	-13.3	-11.6	-8.1	-6.9	-9	-9.1	-7.9
Chhattisgarh	-14.8	-14.3	-14.1	-12.3	-15.1	-11.9	-9.1

Chart 4 | Change in the share of pre-hypertensive teenage girls in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16 (in % points)



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FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 11, 1973

IT officials raid on sky-scrapers in Bombay

Bombay, April 10: The Income-Tax authorities conducted simultaneous raids on more than 150 places here yesterday and to-day stretching from Bhandup to the fashionable southern tip of Bombay where there is nothing but a "concrete jungle of skyscrapers." In the raids they unearthed hidden money amounting to Rs. 15 lakhs and also jewellery valued at Rs. 25 lakhs. Seven individuals who are said to be involved in illegal transactions will be interrogated by the I.T. officials. The Income-Tax authorities who were tight-lipped characterised the raids as "their regular beats." The raids lasted several hours yesterday and more than 50 lockers in banks were sealed. It is common knowledge here that building sky-scrapers and investing money on sky-scraper flats are easy methods to get rich quickly and also to convert "black money" into white. Within one year the value of a flat in a sky-scarper appreciates by leaps and bounds. A flat in a 19-storeyed building with 1000 sq. ft., would cost to the buyer about Rs. 1,30,000. These flats are being re-sold after some time for Rs. 1,60,000 thereby earning Rs. 30,000 in an easy way. The craze for flats in the sky-scrapers was noticeable particularly among those Indians who have come back to India from Uganda and Kenya. Yesterday more than 120 premises were visited by a squad of 200 officers and 600 staff members. A large number of incriminating documents were seized. The extent of unaccounted money employed in these transactions would not, however, be known, unless all the lockers were opened, jewellery valued and the seized materials scrutinised.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 11, 1923

Plague in Delhi

Delhi, April 10: At a special meeting of the Local Municipal Committee held this morning it was decided to appoint a Committee consisting of Municipal Commissioners and leading medical practitioners, like Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Shroff to suggest and regulate relief work in plague-affected areas and a sum of Rs. 40,000 to be placed at the disposal of the committee for the purpose. It was also decided to allot vacant Municipal lands for erecting tohappars (thatched houses) for accommodating people leaving plague-affected areas in the city.

From Page One

India's borders are safe, can't be violated: Shah

"Zangnan is China's territory. Indian officials' activities in this area violate China's sovereignty and territorial sovereignty and not conducive to peace and tranquillity in the border regions. We firmly oppose it," said spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Wang Wenbin. The Ministry of External Affairs is yet to respond to the comment from the Chinese MFA. China has objected in the past as well to visits by Indian Ministers, which the government has rejected.

The Home Minister said people living near the Line of Actual Control are considered the first line of defence. He said they need to be incentivised to stay in these areas, and development under the VVP was essential for this.

'City-like' infrastructure

"The Arunachal Pradesh government and the Centre will take care of the well-being of the villagers. We will fulfil all basic needs. We will take the banks there, help the people open bank accounts, provide electricity, LPG, drinking water, employment, and build toilets. These villages will be connected digitally and physically with the rest of the State and the country," he said, promising "city-like" infrastructure and services to villagers within the next three years. He said the government would ensure environmental and energy security and promoting tourism in the border villages.

Set time limit for clearing Bills: T.N. House

Before Mr. Stalin moved the resolution, Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan moved a resolution to suspend certain rules of the Assembly so that the resolution against the Governor could be taken up for discussion.

Legislators of the AIADMK staged a walkout even before the resolution was moved, alleging that Speaker M. Appavu had not accepted their demand to recognise the Deputy leader of the Opposition. Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K. Palaniswami alleged that live telecast of the Assembly proceedings had been denied to Opposition leaders. Mr. Appavu ordered voting on the resolution of Mr. Duraimurugan to suspend the provision in Rule 92(vii) that barred any debate on the Governor's conduct and the use of his name to influence any debate. The Speaker ordered voting since three-fourth of the members of the House need to support it as per Rule 287 of the Rules.

Mr. Stalin also urged the Union government and the President to prescribe a specific time limit to Governors to give their assent to Bills passed by the legislators who are the voice of the people of the State. He said the government had the constitutional responsibility and democratic duty to fulfill the aspirations and needs of the people.

"This august House records with deep regret the action of the Governor in indefinitely withholding many Bills without giving permission, passed by the Legislative Assembly – on the basis of sovereignty and the legislative responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution – thereby functioning against the welfare of the people of the State," the resolution said. The Speaker after a subsequent voice vote declared that the resolution was adopted unanimously.

Drills across States test COVID preparedness

XBB is an Omicron sub-lineage and it is currently the most prevalent one among the Omicron variants. As many as 400 new sub-variants of Omicron have been identified in India in the past 15 months. Of these, 90% of all variants are XBB.

Indian biologist Vinod Scaria explained that XBB.1.16 is spreading and evolving. "It is expected when a variant spreads, new mutations come up. But nothing at the moment seems to associate the mutation with severity. Mutations come up during replication of the virus in the cells and more infections would mean more mutations," he said.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), in its release issued on Monday, recommended COVID-19 vaccination and booster dose, while stating that there is no role for antibiotics and absolutely no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose/throat with saline/antiseptic solutions has protected people from coronavirus. It said the current surge in cases could be attributed to the relaxation in COVID appropriate behaviour.

SC to hear Gujarat's plea against sharing report

This was after Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for Gujarat, and senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for three Gujarat Police officers allegedly involved in the encounters, objected to the circulation of the copies of the Justice Bedi report to petitioners led by lyricist Javed Akhtar and others representing the late B.G. Varghese, journalist.

The petition was filed way back in 2007. On Monday, Mr. Mehta said this was a "selective PIL" petition filed by people who were "strangers" to Gujarat. He also questioned the need to implement the report. The report, submitted confidentially to the apex court in 2018, had investigated 17 police encounters that occurred between 2002 and 2007 in Gujarat.

Nirmala Sitharaman in Washington to attend IMF, World Bank meetings

Minister will hold talks with U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen today; high on her agenda is the second G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting, which India is hosting as part of its year-long presidency of the grouping

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday began a week-long visit to Washington DC for the World Bank-IMF spring meetings, as well as for other bilateral and multilateral interactions.

High on the Minister's agenda is the second G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting, which India is hosting as part of its year-long presidency of the group. Ms. Sitharaman will also hold high-level talks with her American counterpart, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, on Tuesday.

The Minister and RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will co-chair the FMCBG meet on Wednesday and Thursday, and host some 350 G-20 delegates plus representatives of 13 invitee countries as well as regional and international organisations, according to a government press release.

India's Ambassador to U.S. Taranjit Singh Sandhu with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Washington. PTI

This week's G-20 meeting will have three sessions: Global Economy and International Financial Architecture; Sustainable Finance, Financial Sector and Financial Inclusion; and International Taxation.

The last FMCBG meeting was held in Bangalore in February, and was witness to tensions around discussions and communication about the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It ended without consensus on the language about the war (Russia and China had objections). India then issued a Chair's summary and outcome document, rather than a joint communique.

Core interests

This week's sessions will seek to cover core interests of the government: food and energy security, managing global debt vulnerabilities, strengthening Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), mobilising finance for climate action, financial inclusion, etc. However, the Russia-Ukraine war continues to remain a pressing issue and it is likely to cast its shadow on many of this week's meetings in Washington.

The G-20 meetings will also lay the groundwork for the next FMCBG meeting, which will be held in Gandhinagar in July.

Ms. Sitharaman was received by India's U.S. Ambassador Taranjit Sandhu at Union Station, Washington DC, on Sunday. She also met Param Iyer, the new India-nominated Executive Director at the World Bank, and his IMF counterpart, Krishnamurthy Subramanian.

As part of the spring meetings, Ms. Sitharaman will attend the IMF's Finance Committee meeting and the World Bank's Development Committee meeting; these are the highest-decision making bodies of both organisations.

Ram Navami riots in Bengal pre-planned: Calcutta HC

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Observing that the violence that broke out during the recent Ram Navami processions in certain places of West Bengal was "preplanned", and that there was a failure of intelligence gathering on part of the police, the Calcutta High Court on Monday concluded the hearing on a petition seeking a transfer of the probe into the violence to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya reserved its order on a plea filed by the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari.

The observations were on the basis of reports filed before the High Court by different Police Commissionerates under which the violence occurred.

Punjab Police arrest Amritpal's aide under NSA from Hoshiarpur

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Even as Amritpal Singh, a pro-Khalistan (sovereign state for Sikhs) propagator and the chief of *Waris Punjab De* (WPD) outfit continues to be at large, one of his close associates Papalpreet Singh has been arrested by the Punjab Police.

Without taking any questions during a press conference, Inspector-General of Police (IGP) (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill on Monday said that Papalpreet Singh has been arrested under the National Security Act (NSA). "We have arrested Papalpreet Singh, he has been booked under the NSA. There are six other cases, which have been registered against him, and further legal action will be taken in accordance with the law. Any further development will be shared with the media soon," Mr. Gill said.

He said Mr. Papalpreet was arrested from the Kathunangal area in Amritsar. Mr. Papalpreet has allegedly been in contact with Pakistan's ISI.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab has been facing flak over the poor law and order situation and is being seen on the back foot after the police failed to arrest Mr. Amritpal following the crackdown against him.

After he gave escaped from police net on March 18, 30-year-old Amritpal, who is booked in half a dozen cases, has been on the run since then, raising questions about the police proficiency.

55 held after communal violence in Jamshedpur

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

The Jharkhand police have arrested 55 people, including a local BJP leader, in connection with the clashes that broke out between members of two communities in Jamshedpur on Saturday and Sunday over the alleged desecration of a religious flag.

Shops and vehicles were set on fire during the clashes. Incidents of property damage and stone-throwing were reported on Sunday night from the Shastri Nagar and Kadma areas in the city, following which the district administration imposed Section 144 of the Cr.PC and suspended Internet services.

"A large posse of police personnel was deployed and intense patrolling was done in the violence-hit areas. A total of 55 people from both communities were arrested," K. Vijay Shankar, City Superintendent of Police, Jamshedpur, said. Abhay Singh, a BJP leader, was taken into custody, the police said.

Tension prevails: The paramilitary force patrolling on Monday after clashes broke out over 'desecration' of a religious flag. ANI

Communal tension broke out on Saturday after a Ram Navami flag was allegedly found near a temple in the Shastri Nagar area with pieces of meat in it. The next day, members of a particular community held protests and demanded police action within 24 hours. Residents said a temple committee meeting was held on Sunday when over 100 people, most of them with their faces covered, started throwing stones at the members.

7 killed, 23 hurt after tree falls on tin shed in Akola

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

Seven people were killed and over 30 injured after gusty winds caused a tree to fall on a tin shed inside a temple compound at Paras village in Akola district of Maharashtra. Five others are said to be in a critical condition, said sources.

The incident took place on Sunday evening when devotees had gathered at the Babuji Maharaj temple for the *maha aarti*, said officials. Intense showers caused an 80-year-old neem tree to come crashing down on a tin shed under which devotees were standing.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

SC asks J&K, two States to present views on minorities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday gave Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Telangana a "last opportunity" to give their views on whether minorities should be identified State-wise and not nationally.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, the Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General K.M. Nataraj, kept its view close to its chest. Mr. Nataraj urged the court to give more time to the Union Territory and the two States to respond before going ahead with the case. Agreeing with the Centre's plea, the Bench gave the trio six weeks to break their silence and out their views.

The response on the question has been mixed from the other States and Union Territories across the country, some leaving the task of identifying minorities to the Centre or preferring "status quo" while others, including BJP-ruled Assam and Uttarakhand, and States like West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, maintaining that minorities should be identified at the State level.

Discussed shooting down of Chinese spy balloon with India, says American General

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The U.S. has discussed the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon with India and the challenges involved in it, General Kenneth S. Wilsbach, Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Forces (COMPACAF), said.

He also said that for the first time ever, two B-1 long range bombers of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) would join the bilateral air exercise Cope India, which got under way on Monday.

General Kenneth S. Wilsbach

"We had very brief conversation with most of the air chiefs in the region on some of the situation that occurred with us, the airship that crossed Alaska, Canada and the U.S. and how we went about dealing with it," Gen. Wilsbach said on the balloon incident in an interaction with a small group of journalists. This conversation was few weeks after the incident and "we haven't shared a lot", he said.

In February, a USAF F-22 shot down a Chinese spy balloon off the coast of South Carolina that traversed across North America for several days. There were at least two other instances within a week after that. Over India, there has been at least one incident of a balloon sighting over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Without getting into the specific details, the General said he shared information with the Air chiefs who asked how they did it and what considerations they had when shooting down an airship that was very high and slow moving, that presents some tactical challenges.

One thing that should concern us that value free and open Indo-Pacific and any where else in the world is the sovereignty of the air space, the visiting General said stressing that that every country gets to decide who flies in its sovereign airspace.

"Any country that violates the sovereignty of another country's air space and who is not abiding by international norms should cause concern for us.

Air exercise

On Cope India, Gen. Wilsbach noted that this was the first time that U.S. bombers were here specifically for an exercise. B1s had earlier done flyby during Aero India on two occasions.

"We have an opportunity not only to show the aircraft (B1) in public, the crew have an opportunity to train with one another and incorporate the bombers into the scenarios so that everybody on all sides has a chance to see how they operate and we can improve our tactics, techniques and procedures," he stated.

In all, the USAF is deploying four to six F-15 fighters, one C-17 and two C-130s for the exercise in which Japan is taking part as an observer. Bombers are unique platforms and they have extremely long range and significant payload, he noted, adding, "Message is one of interoperability and the two Air Forces working together."

Efforts on to open Zojila Tunnel ahead of deadline: Gadkari

All-weather link: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, along with J&K Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha, inspecting the tunnel work in Ganderbal. PTI

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Union Minister for Transport and Roadways Minister Nitin Gadkari, who inspected the strategically important Zojila Tunnel that connects the Kashmir Valley with the Union Territory of Ladakh on Monday, said it will realise the dream to have an all-weather road from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Mr. Gadkari said efforts are being made to open the tunnel for traffic ahead of its deadline set for 2026. "We are planning to open part of the project earlier than 2026," he said.

He said the importance of connecting Kashmir and Ladakh was strongly felt by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during the Kargil war between India and Pakistan.

The decision to speed up work comes at a time when troops of India and China are eyeball to eyeball in parts of Ladakh since the Galwan incident in 2020.

India has matched its build-up to the Chinese along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.

Sonamarg is a key route for troops to reach Ladakh. However, the Zojila Pass becomes inaccessible for more than three months in winter and is prone to accidents due to shooting stones and landslides.

The 13.14-km tunnel will facilitate round-the-year transportation of goods to Ladakh and better movement of the armed forces in case of emergency.

SC disagrees with plea on candidates facing charges

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday did not *prima facie* agree with a plea to punish a political party by derecognising it or stripping it off its reserved symbol for fielding a candidate facing serious criminal charges.

A Bench of Justices K.M. Joseph and B.V. Nagarathna was dealing with a petition to amend the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order of 1968.

The petitioner, advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, said national and State political parties should be recognised only if they bar members, against whom "serious offences" have been framed by a court of law, from contesting elections. Mr. Upadhyay asked the court to direct the Election Commission of India to insert this condition into the Symbols Order. However, Justice Joseph said, "Symbols relate to the party and not the candidate."

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, for the Centre, said the loose usage of the term "serious offences" to deprive a political leader of an opportunity to contest in elections would be riddled with problems. "To debar a person from contesting elections cannot be granted," Justice Joseph said.

Cong. calls Pilot's protest 'anti-party', says probe into BJP conspiracy is on

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress late on Monday night issued a statement, asserting that senior leader Sachin Pilot's proposed fast against the Ashok Gehlot government is against party interest and is an anti-party activity.

"If there is any issue with his own government, it can be discussed in the party forums instead of in the media and public. I have been an AICC incharge for the last 5 months and Pilot *ji* has never discussed this issue with me," said All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa.

"I am in touch with him and I still appeal for calm dialogue since he is an indisputable asset to the Congress party," he added.

Earlier, addressing a press conference, AICC spokesperson Pawan Khera said it was 'wrong' to say that the Gehlot government was not acting against corruption and asserted that there was an ongoing investigation into the BJP's attempt to buy MLAs and dislodge the Rajasthan government during COVID as well as a separate probe against Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in the Sanjeevani scam.

Mr. Khera made these remarks in response to questions from reporters on Mr. Pilot's proposed *dharna* (sit-in) against the Gehlot government for "not investigating" corruption cases of the previous Vasundhara Raje-led BJP government.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot (left) and former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot. FILE PHOTO

"A probe is also under way on how the BJP conspired to topple our elected government in Rajasthan and tried to buy our MLAs," Mr. Khera said, adding, "It is wrong to say that a probe is not on, as an investigation is being carried out and if anyone has a complaint, he should bring it to the notice of the AICC in-charge".

Behind conspiracy

He said in the next few months, more information on the probe against Mr. Shekhawat and the "conspiracy" to dislodge the Congress government in Rajasthan would come out. While the Congress spokesperson didn't name Mr. Pilot, the reference to the 'unsuccessful attempt' at dislodging the Gehlot government was an indirect attack on him as he [Mr. Pilot] had led the rebellion against Mr. Gehlot.

On Sunday, after Mr. Pilot had announced that he would undertake a one-day fast and *dharna* on Tuesday against his own government for not acting on the alleged ₹45,000-crore mining scam during the previous BJP regime, the Congress has come out in support of Mr. Gehlot.

"The Congress government in Rajasthan with Shri Ashok Gehlot as CM has implemented a large number of schemes and taken many new initiatives that have impacted the people profoundly. This has given the State a leadership position in governance in our country," Congress communication chief Jairam Ramesh said in a statement on Sunday.

Campaign for outreach of State schemes in Rajasthan

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

In a bid to highlight the "welfare model" of governance in an election year, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is set to launch a State-wide outreach programme to expand the beneficiary base of his government's various schemes.

The campaign branded as "*Mehangai Rahat Abhiyan*", that roughly translates as "inflation relief mission", is likely to be launched this week.

As part of the campaign, according to sources, the government will hold 3,000 camps across airports, bus stands and panchayat offices.

The idea is to enable people to enrol for welfare schemes and increase awareness about all State government programmes. "Say for example, a person has only enrolled under one scheme, but is eligible for another two, she will be able to do it on the spot, using her Jan Aadhaar number and a few documents," a senior Rajasthan government official said.

AAP national party now; Trinamool, CPI and NCP lose status

The Kejriwal-led party had become a State party in four States following the Gujarat Assembly polls; EC order comes after Karnataka HC direction

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In a big boost to the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Election Commission of India (EC) on Monday accorded it the status of a national party while withdrawing the same status for the Trinamool Congress, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

With the removal of the NCP, the CPI and the Trinamool, there are now only six national parties in the country – the BJP, the Congress, the National People's Party (NPP), the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and the latest addition, the AAP.

The AAP has the status of a national party as it secured nearly 13% of the vote share and five seats in the Gujarat Assembly polls earlier this year, making it a State party in four States – Delhi, Goa, Punjab and Gujarat.

Reacting to the achievement, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said, "National party in such a short time? This is nothing less than a miracle. Many congratulations to all. Crores of people of the country have taken us till here. People expect a lot from us. Today, people have given us this huge responsibility. Lord, bless us so that we can fulfil this responsibility well."

Major upgrade: The Karnataka Assembly polls on May 10 would be the AAP's first election as a national party. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The EC's announcement comes a week after the Karnataka High Court directed it to pass an order before April 13 in the matter. The Karnataka polls on May 10 would be the AAP's first election as a "national party". On the other hand, it was a setback for the Trinamool, CPI and NCP, with the poll body withdrawing their national party status citing the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

The NCP lost its status as a State party in Goa, Manipur and Meghalaya; the CPI in West Bengal and Odisha; while the Trinamool was derecognised as a State party in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

NCP leader and Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule said that they would have to accept the order and study it. "Once we receive the official order copy, we will study the reason. Beyond this, I have nothing to comment," she said.

Congress slams Ghulam Nabi Azad for allegations on Rahul's connection with businessmen

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after former Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad claimed that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi kept in touch with "undesirable businessmen", the Congress on Monday said his statements were "contemptible" and reflected his desperation to stay relevant.

"With every passing day, Ghulam Nabi Azad falls to new depths to demonstrate his true character and his loyalty to Mr. [Narendra] Modi. His contemptible statements on the Congress leadership reflect his desperation to remain relevant. I can only say that he is PATHETIC," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet.

In an interview with Malayalam news channel *Asianet News*, Mr. Azad had said,

Jairam Ramesh

"The entire family [Gandhis] has associations with businessmen, including him [Mr. Gandhi]. I can give you 10 examples of where he would go even outside the country, to meet people who are undesirable businessmen."

On Saturday, Mr. Gandhi, in a tweet, alleged that Mr. Azad, along with other Congress-turned-BJP leaders, was trying to divert attention from the Adani issue by targeting him.

Mr. Azad has been giving a series of interviews alongside the formal launch of his autobiography in which he has blamed Mr. Gandhi for mishandling several key political issues, including that of replacing Tarun Gogoi as the Chief Minister of Assam with Mr. Sarma.

In the book, Mr. Azad had claimed that while then Congress chief Sonia Gandhi had given the go-ahead for the leadership change in Assam, Mr. Gandhi did not allow it after Tarun Gogoi and his son and Lok Sabha member Gaurav Gogoi met him.

"It has come to my notice through media reports that Ghulam Nabi Azad *ji* has made certain references to me and my late father regarding a meeting in Delhi. The story is pure fiction and imagination and the book should be publicised as such," tweeted Gaurav Gogoi.

Modi govt. hunting for new spyware with a lower profile than that of Pegasus: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress party spokesperson Pawan Khera on Monday flagged the issue of the government acquiring a "new spyware" similar to the NSO Group's Pegasus that was allegedly used to "snoop" on political opponents, journalists and democratic institutions.

Mr. Khera referred to *The Hindu*'s report on April 5 that the Signal Intelligence Directorate of the Defence Intelligence Agency had imported equipment from Cognyte, an Israeli firm that reportedly develops spyware similar to Pegasus, which allows governments around the world to gain complete access to phones of targets.

"Modi [government] is also desperately hunting for new spyware with a lower profile than the controversial Pegasus system, which was blacklisted by most countries," Mr. Khera said, referring to a *Financial Times* article about the Indian government seeking bids for Pegasus alternatives from firms abroad.

Questions raised

"Who ... authorised the purchase of illegal spyware 'Pegasus' and who is now authorising the purchase of 'Cognyte' or 'Predator' or 'Quadream' or its replacement," Mr. Khera asked in a press note. He asked if the Prime Minister, the Home Minister or the National Security Adviser had authorised the purchase of spyware.

The report of the Supreme Court-ordered investigation into the Indian government's alleged use of Pegasus remains sealed. The government did not cooperate with the investigation, the court had said. Trade data has since confirmed that the NSO Group exported equipment to the Intelligence Bureau in 2017. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project said in a report that the hardware matched the specifications of the hardware previously known to be used to deploy Pegasus.

योजना तथा वास्तुकला विद्यालय, विजयवाडा
School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada
An Institute of National Importance, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India
Survey No.4/4, ITI Road, Vijayawada – 520 008, AP., India.

No. 1.1/SPAV/Acad/PG/Admn/2023-24 10th April, 2023

EXTENSION OF DATES FOR ADMISSION TO POST GRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24 THROUGH DIRECT ADMISSIONS

In supersession of the "Important Dates" mentioned in the General Instructions of the Notification of Direct Admission to Post Graduate Programmes for the Academic Year 2023-24 declared on the website of the School on 08 March 2023, the Competent Authority has extended the last date for receipt of applications and subsequent dates of admission process for the PG Programmes. All other aspects of the admission process as notified earlier, shall remain same. For revised dates of admission process, please visit **https://spav.ac.in/spavadmissions.html**

Sd/- Registrar

e-mail: eerwsskld@gmail.com ; eerwss_kld@nic.in,
Phone No: 06670-230784

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA

INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e -TENDERING
Bid Identification No-01/SE/RWSS/2023-24/Bpt Dated.06.04.2023

01. Name of the work :- As per ANNEXURE - A

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only		Date of Opening (Technical Bid)
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna	01/SE/RWSS/ 2023-24/Bpt Dated- 06.04.2023	13.04.2023 10.00 AM	03.05.2023 05.30 PM	04.05.2023 10.00 AM onwards

Cost of tender paper to be made online payment system.
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tenderodisha.gov.in
The original documents should be scanned and uploaded.

O-27: Superintending Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna
OIPR-25005/11/0001/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
CENTRAL RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR

No. 1772 / Date : 05.04.2023

"e" Procurement Notice for PMGSY Missing Link Bridges for the year 2022-23

1.	Name of the Work	:	Construction of Bridge including five year Maintenance under PMGSY-III, Batch-I of 2022-23
2.	Total No. of Works	:	02 Nos.
3.	Approximate Estimated Cost of the Package	:	Varies from Rs.543.41 lakhs to Rs.592.27 lakhs
4.	Class of Contractor	:	
	a) Estimated cost more than Rs.1.00 Crores upto Rs.20.00 Crores	:	A Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
5.	Period of Completion	:	12 (Twelve) months
6.	Offered rates by bidder	:	The offered rate by the contractor shall be excluding GST.
7.	Other Details	:	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of submission of original financial instrument along with affidavit regarding correctness of information	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To			Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chief Construction Engineer, Central Rural Works Circle, Bhubaneswar	Tender-Online-C.C. 13 of 2023	12.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	28.04.23 up to 5.00 P.M.	26.04.2023 up to 3.00 P.M.	29.04.2023 to 02.05.2023 Up to 5.00 PM (During office hour)	03.05.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	To be intimated lateron

Further details can be seen from the web site **www.pmgsytenders.gov.in**

O-35: Chief Construction Engineer, Central Rural Works Circle, Bhubaneswar.
OIPR-25082/11/0001/2324

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH
HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ROADS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (HPSRTP)
Request for Expression of Interest Proposal (REoI)

Name of Project:Himachal Pradesh State Roads Transformation Project (HPSRTP)
Loan No./Credit No.9066-IN
Grant No:
Date:April 07, 2023

The Director (Projects), HPRIDCL, Nigam Vihar, Shimla-171002 , Himachal Pradesh India invites the Request for Expression of Interest from national consultants for the consultancy services as detailed in the table below:-

Sr. No.	Description of the consultancy Services	Date of availability of Expression of Interest (EoI) on HPRIDCL web site	Last date/Time for submission of Proposals
1.	Engaging a consultant to address the implementation capacity gaps including contract management and corporate governance norms.	April 11, 2023	May 02, 2023

REoI & ToR will be available on the official web site of HPRIDC under link http://himachalservices.nic.in/hpridc/HPSRTP.html .
Note: - Any further addendum/Corrigendum to this Request for Expression of Interest Proposals Documents shall be available to all interesting firms on the same web site link. Proposal must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by post) by May 02, 2023 at 15:00 hours (IST)

Director (Projects)
HPRIDCL Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar Shimla-171002

HP / 0040/2023-2024

APPOINTMENT

Advertisement No. 12 /2023
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board invites applications for the post of

Chairman cum Managing Director
In
Northern Coalfields Limited

Last date of receipt of applications in PESB is

by 15.00 hours on **12th June 2023.**

For details login to website
http://www.pesb.gov.in

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 1) E-Tender No 04/2023-24/SE/PHC/CHN, 2) E-Tender No 05/2023-24/SE/PHC/CHN. 1)JJM 2021-22- Phase II - Ernakulam district - Providing FHTC in Alangad panchayath -Street main extension and FHTC-Pipeline Work 2)CWSS to Puthencruz, Thiruvaniyoor,Poothrikka and Chottanikkara Panchayaths- CWPM from WTP to OHSR, Construction of OHSR at Providing Distribution network and FHTCs in Thiruvaniyoor GP -General Civil Work **EMD :** Rs. 1) 5,00,000/- each **Tender fee :** Rs. 19518 each **Last Date for submitting Tender :** 26-04-2023 03:00:pm. Phone : 0484-2360645
Website : **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**
KWA-JB-GL-6-29-2023-24 Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Kochi

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office : Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091
CIN : U40109WB2007SGC113473, www.wbsedcl.in

WBSEDCL invites e-tender as follows :

NIT No.: CE/Comm/Tender/RDSS/Smart Meter/AMISP/1399 **Dt.:** 06.04.2023 of the **Chief Engineer**, Communication Cell, WBSEDCL for the work of *'Appointment of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Service Provider for Smart Prepaid Metering in WBSEDCL on DBFOOT basis'.* The details will be available on **https://wbtenders.gov.in** & **www.wbsedcl.in** from **12.04.2023** (at **14:00 Hrs.**) onwards.
ICA- T7628(4)/2023

For details, **visit https://wbtenders.gov.in** & **www.wbsedcl.in**

MALABAR CEMENTS LIMITED
(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)
An ISO 9001:2015, 14001:2015 Company, Walayar Post, Palakkad - 678624 - Kerala
Email : materials@malabarcements.com/bulkmcl@malabarcements.com

TENDER NOTICE

Visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in for Online Submission of Bids for :

❖Supply of Deep Bucket Conveyor Chain Assembly and Drive Sprockets ❖Supply of Hammer Welding Electrodes. ❖Supply of Tipper. ❖Supply of Gamma Ray Source. ❖Mining, loading and transportation of Limestone, Overburden and soil to designated locations. ❖Construction of Civil Structure, Fabrication and Erection of (PEB) Steel Structures for Raw Materials Storage shed including both Civil and Structural work at Walayar Plant. ❖Retreading and Repairing of OTR tyres. ❖ Supply of 30,000 MT Cement Grade Limestone to Malabar Cements Limited, Walayar on FOR Walayar basis. ❖Supply of 8000 MT Imported Coal on FOR Malabar Cements Limited Walayar basis.

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED
CIN U75302KL2017SGCO5027

E - TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for the following projects of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Limited Project Area,
1) Request for proposal RFP for Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Sl. No.	Name of Project	E-Tender ID	PAC Amount (Exclusive Of GST)	Bid Submission Last Date
Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.				
1.	Road ID 185 (MRT Road)	2023_SCTLT_552621_3	Rs.1,66,77,152	13/04/2023
2.	Road ID 31A (Keezhe Thampanoor Road)	2023_SCTLT_551304_2	Rs.3,20,36,478	13/04/2023
3	Road ID 180 & 181 (Kamukuvilakom Road and Ankalamman Nagar)	2023_SCTLT_551497_2	Rs.3,51,84,212	13/04/2023
4	Road ID 100 (Justice Sankaranarayana Street)	2023_SCTLT_551252_3	Rs.2,64,00,214	13/04/2023

Date and Time of Opening Price Bid: To Be Intimated Separately to Technically Qualified Bidders by e-mail. All the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Procurement Website. Bids are only accepted online on the Website **https://etenders.kerala.gov.in**

(Sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Ltd

INBRIEF

Delhi HC discharges Vivek Agnihotri from contempt case

The Delhi High Court on Monday discharged filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri in connection with a criminal contempt case over his alleged remarks against a judge of the court after he tendered an unconditional apology. A Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Vikas Mahajan recalled the criminal contempt notice issued to Mr. Agnihotri and noted that an affidavit filed by him reflected the regret expressed by him. "In view of the circumstances that Vivek Agnihotri stated that he has utmost respect for the institution of judiciary and did not intend to wilfully offend the majesty of this court, the notice to show cause issued to him is hereby recalled," the High Court said.

NIA arrests one for alleged links with CPI(Maoist)

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted searches at multiple locations in Jharkhand and arrested one alleged CPI (Maoist) cadre in connection with the attack on security forces in February last year. The arrested person has been identified as Sajan Kumar. The accused worked as a bookkeeper at a brick kiln unit owned by absconding suspect Raju Kumar, who is involved in the collection and investment of funds on behalf of the outfit's regional committee member Ravindra Ganjhu, said the NIA. During the searches in Lohardaga, the agency seized a country-made pistol along with six live rounds, one magazine, and electronic gadgets.

SC dismisses plea on 2019 Congress election manifesto

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed as "thoroughly misconceived" a writ petition seeking a declaration that the Congress manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha electios is contrary to the model code of conduct (MCC). A Bench of Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, P.S. Narasimha, and J.B. Pardiwala dismissed the plea filed by Uttar Pradesh resident and petitioner-in-person, Adarsh Kumar Agarwal. The plea filed by Mr. Agrawal and Seema Jain sought a declaration that the seats won by the Congress be declared void on the ground that the manifesto was violative of the model code.

Court issues warrant to ATS officer in Malegaon blast case

A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Monday issued a bailable warrant of ₹10,000 against an Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) officer for repeatedly not appearing to record his statement in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blasts case trial. The officer was part of the initial investigation team of the ATS and had recorded statements of witnesses in the case. On Monday, the special court ordered the officer to remain present in the court to record his statement on May 2. Last week, a witness – a former Army officer who had mentioned in his earlier statements that one of the accused, Lieutenant Colonel Prasad Purohit, has links to right-wing outfit Abhinav Bharat – was declared hostile.

'India to get below-normal monsoon rainfall this year'

Skymet, a weather forecasting agency, says the rains are expected to be 94% of the long-term average; northern and central parts of the country at risk of being rain deficit

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

Nearly half of India's farmland, which has no irrigation cover, depends on the annual June-September rains to grow crops such as rice, corn, sugar cane, cotton and soybeans. K.V.S. GIRI

India is likely to get "below-normal" monsoon rainfall in 2023, with an increasing likelihood of El-Nino, which typically brings dry weather to Asia, Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, said on Monday.

"Likelihood of El Nino is increasing and its probability to become a dominant category during the monsoon is growing large. El Nino return may presage a weaker monsoon," Jatin Singh, managing director, Skymet, said in a statement.

The monsoon rainfall in India is expected to be 94% of the long-term average, said Skymet, retaining its previous forecast of a subpar monsoon.

India defines normal rainfall as between 96% and 104% of the 50-year average of 88 centimetres for the four-month season beginning June.

The State-run India Meteorological Department (IMD) is expected to announce its annual monsoon forecast soon.

Nearly half of India's farmland, which has no irrigation cover, depends on the annual June-September rain to grow crops such as rice, corn, sugar cane, cotton and soybeans.

Skymet expects northern and central parts of the country to be at risk of being rain deficit.

The States such as Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, known as the agriculture bowl of North India, are likely to get less than normal rainfall during the second half of the season, the weather forecaster said.

Unseasonal rain and hailstorms have damaged ripening, winter-planted crops such as wheat in the fertile northern, central and western plains, exposing thousands of farmers to losses, and raising the risk of further food price inflation.

Centre told to frame policy for menstrual hygiene in schools

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said a "uniform national policy" may be framed by the Centre in consultation with the States and Union Territories to ensure menstrual hygiene by providing sanitary pads, vending and disposal mechanisms and exclusive washrooms for girls in schools.

"It is appropriate if the Union of India deals with the States and Union Territories to form a uniform national policy with sufficient leeway for States and Union Territories based on prevailing conditions," a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said.

The court said the issue was in public interest and highlighted the need for sanitation and menstrual hygiene for girl children in government-aided and residential schools.

The court was hearing a petition to direct the government to ensure provision of sanitary pads to girl students in Classes 6 to 12 and separate toilets.

The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, indicated that the Health, Education and Jal Shakti Ministries were the nodal Ministries. Ms. Bhati said the States also had a vital role to play as education and health came within their jurisdiction.

The court gave the States and Union Territories four weeks to submit to the Union Health Secretary their menstrual hygiene plans. The court asked them to provide the ratio of girls' toilets in schools and the amount spent on low cost sanitary pads, and vending and disposal mechanisms in schools.

The court listed the case after three months by the end of July.

Delhi-London flight returns after man attacks cabin crew

Jagriti Chandra
Mehul Malpani
NEW DELHI

The pilot decided to turn back when the flight was overflying Pakistan near Peshawar.

A 25-year-old male passenger attempted to open one of the doors of an Air India flight from Delhi to London on Monday and assaulted two women cabin crew members, grabbing one by her hair and slapping the other on her face. This forced the pilot to turn back the aircraft 90 minutes after take-off.

The aircraft took off at 6.30 a.m. from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, and the pilot decided to turn back when it was overflying Pakistan near Peshawar.

The airline handed over the passenger to the police when the flight landed in Delhi at 11.30 a.m., it said in a statement.

The passenger has been identified as Jaskirat Singh Padda of Kapurthala. The police have registered an FIR against him.

During the flight, the passenger was engaged in an altercation with his parents who were accompanying him. In a "fit of violent rage", he charged towards the door, said Air India sources.

When he was interrupted, he rattled verbal abuses and physically assaulted two women crew members. Both the crew members had to be taken to hospital after the incident.

"We are yet to officially arrest him, but since most of the Sections are non-bailable, he will be arrested soon," Deputy Commissioner of Police, (IGI) Airport, Devesh Mahla told *The Hindu*, adding that the police were yet to interrogate him.

The passenger was overpowered with the help of other travellers, and strapped to his seat with the help of a restraining device, said airline sources.

Indian History Congress denounces recent changes made in NCERT textbooks

Ziya Us Salam
NEW DELHI

Akbar and his policy of religious tolerance between various religions has been excluded from the syllabus. FILE PHOTO

The Indian History Congress has said that it is "greatly alarmed by the changes in the history syllabi and textbooks" recently effected by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and urged historians to stand up against "distortions of history".

The body issued a statement signed by its president, Professor Kesavan Veluthat, and secretary, Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, expressing apprehensions about the consequences of the new changes.

"The Indian History Congress has been greatly alarmed by the changes in the History syllabi and textbooks that have recently been effected by central official agencies, leading to a plainly prejudiced and irrational perception of our past," the statement read.

The distortions

It pointed out that the University Grants Commission (UGC), in the draft syllabus that it has framed for the Bachelor's course for History, claims for India the "honour" of being the Aryan homeland, deems the epics as possible historical chronicles and excludes all reference to caste system in its ancient India portion. It expressly treats the caste system as an institution arising after the coming of Islam, the statement added.

Mughal emperor Akbar, along with his policy of religious tolerance between various religions, has been excluded from the syllabus. "The students in the Bachelor's course would not, thus, learn of any cultural or intellectual developments of the Mughal era," it read.

It claimed that the same process of "misrepresentation has been introduced in the prescribed History textbooks by omitting whole sections, along with individual passages and sentences [or parts thereof]". These include complete omission of the narrative of the Mughal dynasty which gave India political unity, and sundry other deletions of statements that are held to be inconsistent with the narrow communalist formulations favoured by the present regime. Even the narrative of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination has been trifled with, the statement added.

'Preventive detention gives arbitrary power to state'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday observed in a judgment that preventive detention laws in India are a colonial legacy and confer arbitrary power to the state. A 27-page judgment authored by a Bench led by Justice Krishna Murari described preventive detention laws as "extremely powerful". They have an ability to provide the state with unfettered discretion, the court warned.

"In such a circumstance, where there is a possibility of an unfettered discretion of power by the government, this court must analyse cases arising from such laws with extreme caution, to ensure that there are checks and balances on the power of the government," Justice Murari wrote.

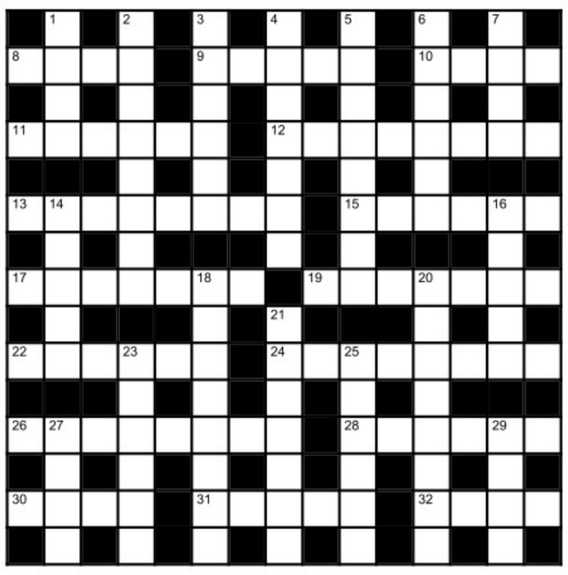
The court said judges should ensure that the government has followed every procedure of law while flexing preventive detention powers against individuals. "Every lapse in procedure must give rise to a benefit to the case of the detenue," Justice Murari observed.

TH CROSSWORD + 13836

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 He took many couples on a boat ride in Genoa harbour (4)
9 Also, the hippopotamus initially gets fang (5)
10 Encounter setter with extra-terrestrial (4)
11 California company hoards one type of cloth (6)
12 No seeker may make paraffin (8)
13 Chef lies about floating platform of frozen water (3,5)
15 Father crushed almond (3,3)
17 Wrongly wed in low visibility condition in North Central region of United States (7)
19 Initially, a true saint went around tree (2,5)
22 Hurt and love a couple of females at last (6)
24 Manipulation of record about copper took place (8)
26 Talks softly, twisting her wisps (8)
28 Otter turning around a circle (6)
30 To some extent, Ribbentrop's crooked (4)
31 Banish old flame on French island (5)
32 Cuts backspin (4)

Down

1 Set dosa and aerated drink (4)
2 Woodcutter's equipment Indian observed after tea (8)
3 A large book about hotel is in (2,4)
4 Flew and dropped (4,3)
5 Hares distribute amongst themselves (5,3)
6 Commercial about dancing emus entertained (6)
7 Grassland has no slope (4)
14 Boss, Charlie is with decapitated robber (5)
16 Passageway in Calais leaks (5)
18 English dads wandering around hiding place made unhappy (8)
20 In the beginning, Indian Railway train carrying tritium derailed, producing a source of discomfort (8)
21 Rio cars driven around for pirate (7)
23 Um... Saturday's last letter is fake (6)
25 Nurses, including his heart and tooth decay (6)
27 Harbour creature's foot part (4)
29 Faucet with European measuring equipment (4)

SUDOKU

5			2			9		
			6	3				
1			7		5		2	
2							3	8
		5	4		3	1		
9	3							7
	5		3		2			6
				1	4			
		2			7			1

No.SS5765 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	6	1	4	8	2	7	9	5
9	7	2	6	1	5	8	4	3
8	5	4	3	7	9	6	1	2
1	8	5	2	3	4	9	7	6
6	4	3	9	5	7	1	2	8
7	2	9	8	6	1	3	5	4
4	9	8	7	2	3	5	6	1
2	1	6	5	9	8	4	3	7
5	3	7	1	4	6	2	8	9

FAITH

Surrender wipes out karmas

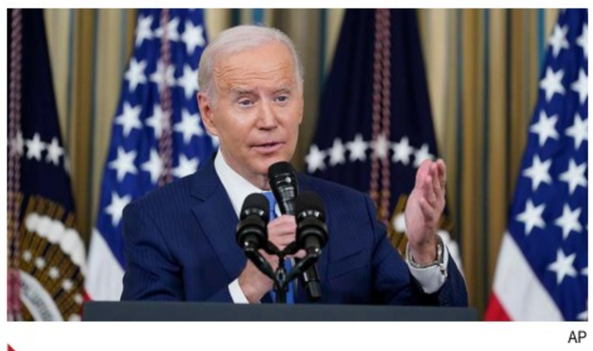
Most of us have a lot of questions about karma. If good deeds have their rewards, and bad deeds have punishments, why is it that good people suffer in this world? And when we witness the good suffering and the bad prospering, we begin to have doubts about the validity of karma and its effects.

So, does karma really work? Karma most certainly works, but not in the way we think, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse. It is not as if a deed has an instantaneous result. We never know what we did in previous births, which has resulted in some joy in this life, or some difficulty in this life. That is why we see righteous men suffer. They are facing the consequences of something they did in some previous birth. But if karma can keep striking us like this, how do we get out of it?

One way to get rid of the effects of bad deeds is to face whatever consequences come our way, and thus nullify the effect of bad deeds. Another way is atonement (*prayaschitta*). If we think we can be rid of the effects of bad deeds by facing the results for them, the problem is that even as we are facing problems in this birth, we commit more mistakes, for which we will have to pay in future birth. And so this does not seem a good option. As for *prayaschitta*, our very way of atonement may fall short of prescribed mode of *prayaschitta*. Or we may do it all in the wrong way, and thus the effects of our bad deeds are going to continue. The only way out of samsaric cycle is through surrender to the Lord. To reach His feet and to serve Him – this is Parama Purushartha. Only bhakti or prapatti can completely wipe off all karmas and liberate us.

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden says he is planning to run again in 2024 polls

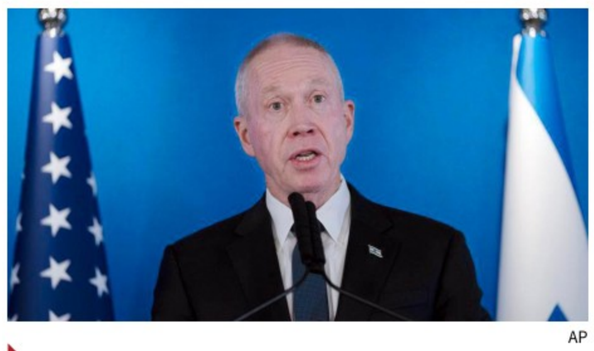


AP

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Monday he plans to run for reelection in 2024 but was not prepared to announce it yet. "I plan on running ... but we're not prepared to announce it yet," Mr. Biden said in an interview with NBC. Both Mr. Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris have said they will run together. REUTERS

JERUSALEM

Israeli PM reverses his decision to sack Defence Minister Yoav Gallant



AP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would leave Defence Minister Yoav Gallant (in photo) in place given a security crisis, reversing a decision to fire the Minister. He said the two had resolved their disagreement over Gallant's public call last month for a halt to the government's divisive judicial overhaul plan. REUTERS

BEIJING

China jails two prominent human rights lawyers for over 10 years

AFP

Two prominent Chinese human rights lawyers, including one who had called for leader Xi Jinping to resign, have been jailed for over a decade, an advocacy group and one of the men's wives said on Monday. Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiaxi were convicted of "subversion of state power" following closed-door trials. AFP

DHAKA

Bangladeshi cleric among four held for stoning woman over affair

AFP

An Islamic cleric and three village elders in Bangladesh were arrested on charges they ordered a woman to be caned and stoned after she was accused of an extramarital affair, the police said. Hamida Sultana was "caned 82 strokes" and "stoned 80 times" after an imam issued a fatwa, punishing her last week. AFP

China military 'ready to fight' after exercises near Taiwan

The theatre's troops are ready to fight at all times and can fight at any time to resolutely smash any form of Taiwan independence and foreign interference attempts, says Beijing after the drills

Associated Press
TAIPEI

China's military declared on Monday it is "ready to fight" after completing three days of large-scale combat exercises around Taiwan that simulated sealing off the island in response to the Taiwanese President's trip to the U.S. last week.

The "combat readiness patrols" named Joint Sword were meant as a warning to self-governing Taiwan, which China claims as its own, China's military said earlier.

"The theatre's troops are ready to fight at all times and can fight at any time to resolutely smash any form of 'Taiwan independence' and foreign interference attempts," it said on Monday.

Military might: A PLA Navy landing ship sails towards China's closest point to Taiwan in Fujian province on Monday. AFP

The exercises were similar to the ones conducted by China in last August, when it launched missile strikes on targets in the seas around Taiwan in retaliation for then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, but have been smaller and less disruptive.

Military experts say the exercises serve both as intimidation and as an opportunity for Chinese troops to practice sealing off Taiwan by blocking sea and air traffic, an important strategic option the Chinese military might pursue in the event it uses military force to take Taiwan.

U.S. ship's trespassing

The exercises this time have focused more on air strength, with Taiwan reporting 200 flights by Chinese warplanes in the past three days.

Meanwhile, to the south in the South China Sea, the U.S. 7th Fleet said its missile destroyer *USS Milius* sailed by China's Mischief Reef in a freedom of navigation operation.

China said the U.S. "illegally trespassed" into waters near the reef without its permission .

U.S. scrambles to trace source of highly classified intel leak

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Classified documents that appeared online, with details ranging from Ukraine's air defences to Israel's Mossad spy agency, have U.S. officials scrambling to identify the leak's source, with some experts saying it could be an American.

The Pentagon said that the leaks posed a "very serious" risk to U.S. national security.

Officials say the breadth of topics addressed in the documents, which touch on the war in Ukraine, China, West Asia and Africa, suggest they may have been leaked by an American rather than an ally. "The focus now is on this being a U.S. leak, as many of the documents were only in U.S. hands," Michael Mulroy, a former Pentagon official said. U.S. officials said the investigation is in its early stages and those running it have not ruled out the possibility that pro-Russian elements were behind the leak.

The files' topics, such as Ukraine, China and West Asia, suggest they may have been leaked by an American rather than an ally

Following disclosure of the leak, Reuters has reviewed more than 50 documents labeled "Secret" and "Top Secret" that first appeared last month on social media websites.

Reuters has not independently verified the authenticity of the documents. Some giving battlefield casualty estimates from Ukraine appeared to have been altered to minimise Russian losses. It is not clear why at least one is marked unclassified but includes top-secret information. Some documents are marked "NOFORN," meaning they cannot be released to foreign nationals.

One of the documents marked "Secret," outlines in detail how Ukraine's S-300 air defence systems would be depleted by May 2 at the current usage rate.

Another document, marked "Top Secret" and from a CIA Intel update from March 1, says the Mossad intelligence agency was encouraging protests against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The document said the U.S. learned this through signals intelligence, suggesting the United States had been spying on one of its most important allies in West Asia.

Four killed, at least 8 injured in Kentucky bank shooting

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Four persons were killed and at least eight others were injured on Monday in a shooting targeting a bank in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, according to U.S. police who said the suspect – believed to be an ex-employee – died in the assault.

The police said they received an early morning alert to an "active aggressor" at the Old National Bank in Louisville. They "encountered the suspect almost immediately, still firing gunshots," a police official said, adding that the shooter had died at the scene.

At least four other persons were killed in the bank and eight – including two police officers – were being treated for injuries.

Dalai Lama apologises for asking boy to suck tongue

Agence France-Presse
NEW DELHI

The Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama apologised on Monday after a video which showed him asking a boy to suck his tongue triggered a backlash on social media.

The video, which has gone viral, shows the Dalai Lama, 87, planting a kiss on the boy's lips as he leaned in to pay his respects.

The Buddhist monk is then seen sticking his tongue out as he asked the child to suck it. The video is from an event in McLeod Ganj in Dharamshala in India, on February 28.

Taliban issue new rules against women

Associated Press
KABUL

The Taliban banned families and women from restaurants with gardens or green spaces in Afghanistan's Herat province. The move followed complaints from religious scholars and members of the public about mixing of genders in such places.

Authorities say the curbs are in place because of gender mixing or because women allegedly are not wearing the hijab, correctly. The outdoor dining ban only applies to establishments in Herat, where such premises remain open to men.

As the Ukraine war grinds on, Russia, India seek ways to keep defence trade afloat

Ksenia Kondratieva
ST. PETERSBURG

A year after the Ukraine war began, there are growing speculations about the ability of Russia, hit by heavy western sanctions and faced with dwindling exports, to continue to supply defence systems to India. Such concerns are largely rooted in payment problems that India and Russia are yet to resolve, according to sources in the Russian government, defence, and banking sectors.

There were media reports last month that India may not get the delivery of the two remaining S-400 Triumf missile defence systems that it had ordered in 2018 for around $5.4 billion. Russian officials refuted the reports. "Russian-Indian defence cooperation is developing steadily in accordance with previously reached agreements and signed documents," said the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS), which oversees military-technical cooperation with foreign countries.

Off the record, however, officials admit payment remains an issue when it comes to trade with India.

Russia is currently fulfilling several major contracts previously signed with India, including, the S-400 systems and two Project 11356 frigates. There are more deals on the plate, including procurement of additional and modernisation of existing Sukhoi Su-30 MKI and upgrade of MIG-29s.

Russia is currently fulfilling contracts signed with India, including the S-400 systems.

India's total imports from Russia rose by five times from $8.5 billion in April 2022 to $41.6 billion in February 2023, driven mainly by oil supplies. A source in the banking industry with direct knowledge of negotiations on payments said almost the entire amount of this $41 billion has now accumulated in the vostro accounts opened by Russian banks with authorised dealer banks in India.

The most preferable way for Russia to get further payments would be roubles – something that India is not able to do.

Two impediments

Aleksei Zakharov, research fellow at the School of International Affairs, Higher School of Economics, pointed out two key impediments in rouble payment: first, the concerns of the Indian financial sector which is overall slowly adopting new mechanisms, and second, lack of trust on the Russian rouble. "India is hesitant about the rouble after it experienced a serious shock last year, and there is an understanding that it is almost impossible to evaluate it correctly. Therefore, the Indian side has no particular interest in trading in the Russian currency and Delhi tried to rely on payments in the rupee. But then, the question Russia faces is whether it needs such an overabundance in the rupee."

This issue is likely to be discussed on April 17-18, when a delegation from Russia travels to New Delhi for a meeting of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.

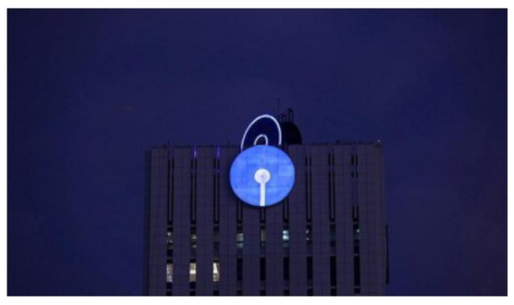
According to the latest report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a Swedish think tank,

Russia's share of arms imports to India fell from 69% in 2012-17 to 46% in 2017-21, while Moscow still remained the key defence supplier to New Delhi.

The situation is not very favourable for Russia, but things could change, said Alexey Kupriyanov, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow. "Russia is likely to emerge from the conflict having a range of weapons that are tested in combat and that are significantly improved and upgraded based on their real-time performance. This will give Russia a great advantage in terms of defence exports," Mr. Kupriyanov added. But for the big business to take off, the conflict should come to an end first.

Ksenia Kondratieva is an independent journalist based in St. Petersburg

INBRIEF



State Bank to consider raising $2 billion via offshore bonds

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, said on Monday it would consider raising $2 billion via offshore bonds. The board will meet on April 18 to consider the fund raising, through a public offer or private placement of senior unsecured notes in U.S. dollar or any other convertible foreign currency during the financial year 2023-24, the public sector lender said in an exchange filing. REUTERS

JSW One Platforms raises ₹205 cr. from Japan's Mitsui

JSW One Platforms, the B2B e-com venture of the JSW Group, said it had raised ₹205 crore from Japan's Mitsui & Co. Ltd. in a series A funding round. The round "values JSW One Platforms at over ₹2,750 crore," as per a statement. "Mitsui's decision to invest in our e-commerce business validates our long-term strategic vision to capitalise on technology to take a strong leadership position in the B2B e-com sector," said Parth Jindal, director, JSW One Platforms.

Cipla signs pact with Novartis for diabetes drug Galvus

Drugmaker Cipla has signed a perpetual licence agreement with Novartis Pharma AG (Switzerland) to manufacture and market diabetes drug Galvus and its combination brands from January 1, 2026. One of the leading brands in the Dipeptidyl Peptidase-4 (DPP4) space, especially in oral diabetic medication, Galvus has potential to contribute significantly to its portfolio with reported sales of ₹268 crore, Cipla said citing IQVIA (MAT February 2023) numbers.

States' subsidy accounting must be transparent: CAG

'We wish to distinguish justifiable subsidies from freebies, which are not fiscally responsible; States must earn adequate returns on investments, recover the cost of borrowing sans implicit subsidies'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India, G.C. Murmu, on Monday said States must take measures to maintain proper accounting of subsidies, reduce fiscal deficits, remove revenue deficits and keep outstanding debts at an acceptable level.

At the Annual Accountant General's Conclave, Mr. Murmu said States should meet their capital expenditure, including loans and advances, from their own sources of revenue, or at least confine net debt to capital expenditure. "While we understand the importance of subsidies to help the underprivileged, it is essential to transparently account for such subsidies... we require to distinguish between justifiable subsidies from freebies, which are not fiscally responsible," he said. States must earn returns on their investments and "recover their cost of borrowed funds without resorting to implicit subsidies."

"We... continue to notice fiscal sustainability risks and financial indiscipline in many States due to off-budget borrowings, misclassification of revenue expenditure as capital expenditure and because State guarantees are not... captured in finance accounting," he said.

Word of caution

States should meet their capital expenditure, including loans and advances, from their own sources of revenue

- Or, they must at least confine their net debt to capital expenditure
- Continuing to notice fiscal sustainability risks, financial indiscipline in many States, says CAG
- This stems from off-budget borrowings and misclassification of revenue expenditure as capex

General PF rate remains at 7.1% for April-June

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government has retained the interest rate payable on savings in the General Provident Fund (GPF) at 7.1% for the April to June 2023 quarter, making this the 13th quarter in a row that the rates have been static for government employees' PF corpus.

The Finance Ministry notified this quarter's interest rate on GPF savings, which is on a par with the returns announced for the Public Provident Fund (PPF), on April 10. The GPF rate is also applicable for other similar provident funds such as the State Railway PF, Armed Forces Personnel PF, Defence Services Officers' PF and Indian Ordnance Factories Workmen's PF.

The rate of return on the PPF, a small savings scheme that offers tax-free returns, was last raised in January 2019 and has remained unchanged since April 2020 when it was slashed from 7.9% to 7.1%.

The government has increased the rates on almost all the small savings schemes for this quarter, barring the PPF rate as officials feel that the tax-free returns of PPF translate into a higher effective yield for its investors.

However, the rate on another tax-free savings scheme, the Sukanya Samriddhi Account introduced to encourage savings for the girl child in 2015, was raised this quarter for the first time in four years - from 7.6% to 8%.

Reliance, Adani show interest in Future Retail

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

As many as 49 players, including Reliance Retail, Jindal Power Ltd., and Adani group have submitted Expressions of Interest (EoIs) for acquiring the assets of debt-ridden Future Retail.

On March 23, creditors of Future Retail invited new EoIs whereby prospective buyers can bid for the firm "as a going concern or individual cluster or a combination of clusters of its assets," as it failed to attract a resolution plan.

India said to deny U.K. trade talks halted over Khalistan stir

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

A government source said the next round of trade talks would take place in London on April 24

Government sources in New Delhi on Monday said reports of India halting talks for a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom over the recent pro-Khalistan protests in London, are "baseless".

The U.K. media had earlier reported that the Indian Government had "disengaged" from the trade talks, indicating that dialogue on the FTA could not proceed further "without a public condemnation of the Khalistan movement".

A government source however "denied" the report and termed it "baseless", informing that the next round of trade talks would take place in London on April 24.

The problem started on March 19 when a pro-Khalistan protest outside the Indian High Commission attempted to vandalise the Indian mission and took down the national tricolour. The agitators were demanding an end to the crackdown against extremist preacher Amritpal Singh and his followers from the separatist group – Waris Punjab De (WPD).

The India-U.K. FTA talks were launched on June 17, 2022, amid expectations of its conclusion by Diwali in October. The last round of India-U.K. dialogue over the FTA concluded on February 10 and the next round was expected to be held in March when the pro-Khalistan protests broke out over police action against Amritpal Singh in Punjab.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	59,847	0.02
US Dollar	81.99	-0.12
Gold	60,095	-0.45
Brent oil	84.47	-

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	1797.25	43.20
Adani Ports	652.00	10.40
Apollo Hosp	4237.00	35.05
Asian Paints	2776.35	-33.50
Axis Bank	847.35	-4.60
Bajaj Auto	4061.60	28.00
Bajaj Finserv	1305.05	1.10
Bajaj Finance	5828.80	-103.40
Bharti Airtel	769.75	3.80
BPCL	335.80	3.80
Britannia Ind	4266.40	-33.40
Cipla	901.85	8.50
Coal India	222.05	0.35
Divis Lab	2909.65	-11.80
Dr Reddys Lab	4759.65	60.25
Eicher Motors	2970.45	8.75
Grasim Ind	1710.25	41.20
HCL Tech	1103.10	11.25
HDFC	2727.75	-1.55
HDFC Bank	1658.45	-7.90
HDFC Life	513.70	-0.95
Hero MotoCorp	2460.65	34.20
Hindalco	411.45	6.20
Hind Unilever	2532.15	-33.10
ICICI Bank	868.45	-6.55
IndusInd Bank	1069.30	-12.70
Infosys	1427.60	5.70
ITC	388.55	1.20
JSW Steel	688.50	5.80
Kotak Bank	1759.30	2.20
L&T	2309.70	35.45
M&M	1188.60	17.35
Maruti Suzuki	8535.15	18.50
NestleIndia	19530.20	-178.05
NTPC	177.60	2.40
ONGC	157.15	6.55
PowerGrid Corp	229.05	3.80
Reliance Ind	2324.85	-16.60
SBI Life	1106.25	-10.00
State Bank	526.30	-1.35
Sun Pharma	1008.60	-3.50
TataConsumerProduct	720.65	-9.85
Tata Motors	461.30	23.65
Tata Steel	104.95	0.60
TCS	3263.40	42.70
Tech Mahindra	1107.25	14.50
Titan	2583.70	35.25
UltraTech Cement	7696.25	-5.60
UPL	737.75	11.60
Wipro	373.30	6.65

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 10

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	81.78	82.10
Euro	89.18	89.56
British Pound	101.67	102.07
Japanese Yen (100)	61.83	62.08
Chinese Yuan	11.89	11.94
Swiss Franc	90.28	90.65
Singapore Dollar	61.54	61.80
Canadian Dollar	60.61	60.87
Malaysian Ringitt	18.54	18.63
Australian Dollar	54.55	54.77

Source:Indian Bank

'Electric two-wheeler sales in India rose over twofold in FY23'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Electric two-wheeler sales (E2W) in India rose over twofold to 8,46,976 units in 2022-23 compared with the previous fiscal, the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) said.

SMEV said in FY23, E2W adoption ended "with an annual shortfall of more than 25% over the minimum target set by NITI Aayog and various research organisations."

Withholding subsidy

SMEV said withholding of subsidies under FAME II for not complying with the Phased Manufacturing Programme norms impacted sales of E2Ws.

"With only 5% adoption in FY23, the short-term goal of 30% and the EV mission of 80% adoption by 2030 looks more like a mirage," said SMEV Director General Sohinder Gill.

SMEV added, "Due to supply-chain interruptions during COVID, the industry suffered greatly to find high-quality components."

'Over half of heavy industry eyeing low-carbon hydrogen'

K.C. Deepika
BENGALURU

Apart from cost and engineering, lack of skills and expertise is also a top challenge to scaling hydrogen

As much as 62% of heavy industry companies across sectors are looking at low-carbon hydrogen to replace carbon-intensive systems, according to a new report from the Capgemini Research Institute.

The report titled "Low-Carbon Hydrogen – A Path to a Greener Future," also found on average, Energy and Utilities (E&U) firms expect low-carbon hydrogen to meet 18% of total energy use by 2050.

Demand from more than half of organisations has grown by more than 10% in France, India, the U.K., Japan, the U.S., Germany and Sweden.

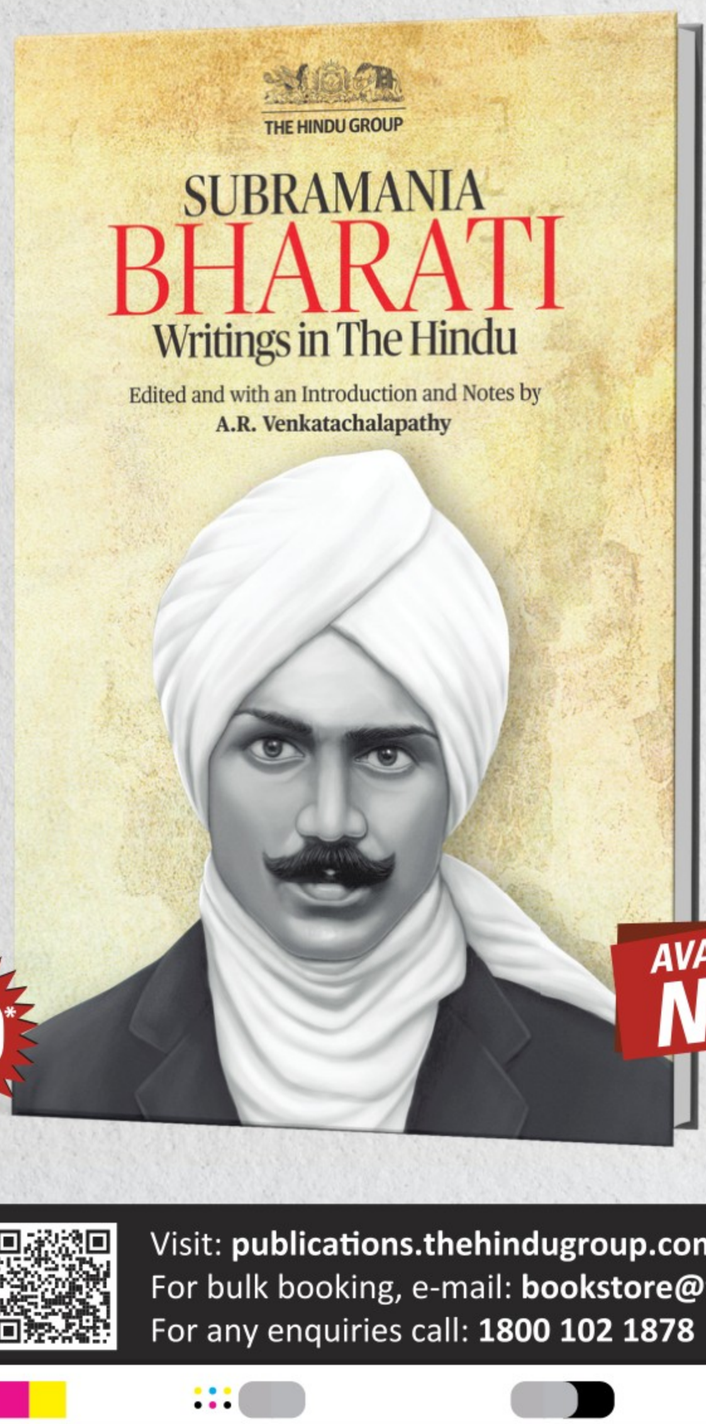
This demand is expected to continue to grow, particularly in traditional hydrogen applications such as petroleum refining. However, the report acknowledges challenges with hydrogen production, with current methods neither cost-effective nor environmentally friendly.

Apart from cost, infrastructure and engineering issues, lack of skill and expertise is also a top challenge to scaling hydrogen.

THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

Subramania Bharati was more than the foremost poet of Tamil Nadu. He was also a sharp commentator on the social and political issues of his time. This book brings together all of his writings in *The Hindu* during his exile in Pondicherry.



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EID Parry declares 2nd interim dividend of ₹4

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The board of EID Parry India Ltd. on Monday approved the payment of second interim dividend of ₹4 per share for FY23, representing 400% on each equity share having a face value of ₹1 each.

The company has fixed April 21 as the record date for the payment of interim dividend, according to a regulatory filing.

The dividend would be paid on or after May 3 but within 30 days from date of declaration of the dividend, the Murugappa group company said in the filing.

Temasek control won't change Manipal: Pai

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Ranjan Pai

Temasek, Singapore-based sovereign wealth fund, raising its stake in Manipal Health Enterprise (MHE) to a controlling position will not result in any change in the 'operation' and 'management' of the healthcare chain, said Ranjan Pai, chairman, Manipal Group.

According to market observers, Temasek's stake buyout could be in the range of ₹16,000 crore, valuing MHE, the holding arm of Manipal Hospitals, at about ₹40,000 crore, thus making the deal probably the largest in the Indian healthcare sector.

"The way we run business at Manipal Group is one of the main reasons why Temasek was interested in us, earlier and now again. We have been successful in separating the management away from the ownership," Dr. Pai told *The Hindu*.

He said MHE, along with Temasek, would continue to expand business, explore greenfield hospital projects and scout for suitable M&A opportunities.

Chennai, Kamarajar ports target 100 MT cargo

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai Port and its subsidiary Kamarajar Port have set a target to handle 100 million tonnes (MT) of cargo for FY24, against 92.45 million tonnes handled in the just-ended fiscal year, said a top official.

"While the Chennai Port plans to handle 52 million tonnes, KPL would handle about 48 million tonnes," said Sunil Paliwal, chairman, Chennai Port Authority and CMD, Kamarajar Port Ltd. For FY23, Chennai Port's net surplus rose 33% to ₹150 crore while KPL's net surplus grew 24% to ₹670 crore.

CHANGE OF HANDS

Knight Rider Rinku makes good use of skipper Rana's bat

The bat with which KKR's Rinku Singh hit five successive sixes against Titans on Sunday belonged to Nitish Rana. "The one Rinku used is my bat. Rinku asked me but I didn't want to give him initially, but somebody brought it from the dressing room. I had a feeling he would take this because it has a nice pickup," Rana said.

CLASS ACT

Dhawan's 99 one of best I have seen in T20 cricket, says Lara

Shikhar Dhawan's 99 off 66 balls could not help Punjab Kings win over Sunrisers but Brian Lara was mighty impressed, describing the knock as one of the best T20 innings he has ever seen. "I think it is one of the best innings I've ever seen in T20 cricket," Lara said. "The way he shepherded the strike and totally just controlled the game."

IN GOOD FORM

Shastri backs Gill to break Kohli's record in a single season

Ravi Shastri has put his money on Shubman Gill to break Virat Kohli's record of amassing the most runs — 973 — in a single IPL season. "He (Gill) has to be an opener, because only then will he get many opportunities to score runs. I feel, it is Subhman Gill because he is in good form and also because he plays top of the order."

TIME TO FIRE

We have to work on our PowerPlay game with the bat: Amre

Pravin Amre has underlined the importance of the top batters coming good to change the fortunes of Delhi Capitals. Speaking on the eve of the contest against Mumbai Indians, he said , "We have to work on our PowerPlay game with the bat. When your top four batters get runs, then your team is in a different position."

Stoinis, Pooran roar as Super Giants win humdinger

Chasing a stiff target of 213, the two put the RCB attack to the sword; the West Indian smashes the fastest half-century of the season; Kohli, du Plessis and Maxwell's knocks go in vain

IPL-16

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Lucknow Super Giants edged a nerve-wracking Indian Premier League tie against Royal Challengers Bangalore by one wicket at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Monday.

Harshal Patel nearly defended five runs off the final over but Dinesh Karthik's fumble helped Ravi Bishnoi and Avesh Khan sneak a bye with one needed from one ball.

When seven runs were required from nine deliveries, Impact Player Ayush Badoni (for Amit Mishra) scooped Wayne Parnell over the fine-leg boundary but unfortunately hit the wicket on the follow-through. But he would taste salvation not long after.

Despite being reduced to 23 for three, LSG chased down the stiff 213-run target on the back of two swashbuckling half-centuries from Marcus Stoinis (65, 30b, 6x4, 5x6) and Nicholas Pooran (62, 19b, 4x4, 7x6).

Stoinis, sporting a minimalist's air, smashed Harshal, Karn Sharma and Shahbaz Ahmed for 45 runs across three overs to shift momentum. RCB excised Stoinis and K.L. Rahul in a span of four balls, but couldn't arrest the flow of runs.

The propellers: Stoinis and Pooran swung the momentum Super Giants' way in a big chase. K. MURALI KUMAR

At that stage, LSG needed 108 off 53 balls and Pooran played like a man possessed, blasting everything in sight to score the season's fastest fifty (15b), brought up with a towering six over long-on off Parnell. Badoni (30, 24b, 4x4) and the tail ensured the effort didn't go waste.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, Virat Kohli (61, 44b, 4x4, 4x6), Faf du Plessis (79 n.o., 46b, 5x4, 5x6) and Glenn Maxwell (59, 29b, 3x4, 6x6), took turns to flay the LSG attack.

Kohli's first hit to the boundary – a top-edged six over fine-leg – wasn't indicative of his recent form. The rest of the shots were, like the two fours through extra-cover off Avesh and the six over deep mid-wicket off Mark Wood.

But from 56 for no loss (six overs), RCB struggled as Bishnoi and Krunal Pandya bowled three boundary-less overs. Leggie Mishra snapped up Kohli three balls after being introduced. du Plessis then took charge. The skipper, who was on 33 from 30 balls, hammered Bishnoi for the second a monstrous shot over long-on.

The half-century (35b) came when he sent Wood soaring over long-off.

Maxwell completed a flamboyant fifty, replete with cross-batted heaves, audacious swats and inventive slices.

The Aussie and the South African collected 57 runs from overs 17 to 19.

But it was Super Giants who had the last laugh.

Oh, no! Badoni scooped Parnell for a six but hit the wicket on the follow-through. K. MURALI KUMAR

Next assignment

RCB: April 15 **vs. DC**
Bengaluru, 3.30 p.m.

LSG: April 15 **vs. PBKS**
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Virat Kohli c Stoinis b Mishra 61 *(44b, 4x4, 4x6)*, Faf du Plessis (not out) 79 *(46b, 5x4, 5x6)*, Glenn Maxwell b Wood 59 *(29b, 3x4, 6x6)*, Dinesh Karthik (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-8, w-4): 12; Total (for two wkts. in 20 overs): 212.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-96 (Kohli, 11.3 overs), 2-211 (Maxwell, 19.5).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Unadkat 2-0-27-0, Avesh 4-0-53-0, Krunal 4-0-35-0, Wood 4-1-32-1, Bishnoi 4-0-39-0, Mishra 2-0-18-1.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Kyle Mayers b Siraj 0 *(3b)*, K.L. Rahul c Kohli b Siraj 18 *(20b, 1x4)*, Deepak Hooda c Karthik b Parnell 9 *(10b, 1x4)*, Krunal Pandya c Karthik b Parnell 0 *(2b)*, Marcus Stoinis c Shahbaz b Karn 65 *(30b, 6x4, 5x6)*, Nicholas Pooran c Shahbaz b Siraj 62 *(19b, 4x4, 7x6)*, Ayush Badoni **(Impact Player in place of Mishra)** hit wicket b Parnell 30 *(24b, 4x4)*, Jaydev Unadkat c du Plessis b Harshal 9 *(7b, 1x4)*, Mark Wood b Harshal 1 *(2b)*, Ravi Bishnoi (not out) 3 *(2b)*, Avesh Khan (not out) 0 *(1b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-6, w-9): 16; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 213.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Mayers, 0.3), 2-23 (Hooda, 3.4), 3-23 (Krunal, 3.6), 4-99 (Stoinis, 10.4), 5-105 (Rahul, 11.1), 6-189 (Pooran, 16.6), 7-206 (Badoni, 18.4), 8-209 (Wood, 19.2), 9-212 (Unadkat, 19.5).

RCB BOWLING
Siraj 4-0-22-3, Willey 4-0-32-0, Parnell 4-0-41-3, Harshal 4-0-48-2, Karn **(Impact Player in place of Anuj Rawat)** 3-0-48-1, Shahbaz 1-0-15-0.

Toss: LSG.
PoM: Pooran.
LSG won by one wicket off the final delivery.

DC, MI in the same boat

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians – the two winless teams firmly in the cellar – face off on Tuesday in their bid to get going in this year's IPL.

Both have pointed to the "lack of momentum" to their campaigns while sidestepping the fact that most of their players have not performed according to reputation.

The truth is, if Delhi has consistently bowled poorly in the PowerPlay and at the 'death', Mumbai has twice failed to put enough runs on the board for its inadequate bowling resources to defend. In short, there are problems aplenty for both teams.

Capitals skipper David Warner has scored 158 runs in three innings playing the role of sheet-anchor. But the continued failure of the top-order has left Warner playing a lone hand. Prithvi Shaw continues to put no price on his wicket, while the overseas recruits have done precious little. Mitchell Marsh has returned home for his wedding.

Mumbai relies too heavily on skipper Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav.

Moreover, given the lack of quality in its bowling, the Mumbai batters have to be ready to do the heavy lifting.

Let's do it! Rohit, right, will look to turn things around. R.V. MOORTHY

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Lucknow Super Giants	4	3	1	6	1.048
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	4	2.067
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	4	1.375
Gujarat Titans	3	2	1	4	0.431
Chennai Super Kings	3	2	1	4	0.356
Punjab Kings	3	2	1	4	-0.281
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	1	2	2	-0.800
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	2	-1.502
Mumbai Indians	2	0	2	0	-1.394
Delhi Capitals	3	0	3	0	-2.092

After the RCB-LSG match on April 10

Today's match

DELHI CAPITALS vs. MUMBAI INDIANS

Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 32
DC 15 | MI 17

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by **five wickets**, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Domestic season to begin early due to WC

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The 2023-24 domestic season is set to be advanced by more than a month and is set to begin June-end. The rescheduling is due to India hosting the men's ODI World Cup in October-November.

According to the provisional domestic calendar prepared during the BCCI's apex council meeting late on Sunday, the Duleep Trophy will be the season-opening tournament, starting June 28. The Deodhar Trophy is scheduled from July 24 to August 1.

Then on, till the Irani Cup starting October 1, the domestic cricket action will come to a halt.

The World Cup is likely to be played from October 5 to November 19.

Clashing with the marquee event will be the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and the Senior Women's T20 Trophy. The Vijay Hazare Trophy is set to begin four days after the World Cup final while the Ranji Trophy will begin on Jan. 5 next year. The final will be from March 10 to 14.

Steady Rahm slips into Green Jacket

AUGUSTA MASTERS

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Jon Rahm delivered tension-packed clutch shots down the stretch on Sunday to win the Masters, capturing his second Major title and reclaiming the World No. 1 ranking.

The 28-year-old Spaniard held firm, playing iron-solid and mistake-free golf until the final hole to methodically fend off leader Brooks Koepka and Phil Mickelson.

Rahm fired a three-under 69 to finish 72 holes at Augusta National on 12-under 276 to win by four strokes. Rahm, the 2021 US Open champion, won the Green Jacket and a record top prize of $3.24 million from a record $18 million purse.

Rahm, with three other PGA Tour triumphs this year, won on what would have been the 66th birthday of his idol, the late Seve Ballesteros, who claimed the Masters 40 years ago.

Rahm achieved what he called a "true honour" in becoming the fourth Spaniard to grab the Green Jacket after Ballesteros, Jose Maria Olazabal – he was on hand just off the 18th green to congratulate his countryman – and Sergia Garcia.

Rahm, ranked third, overtook 2022 Masters champion Scottie Scheffler as World No. 1 with the triumph after the American shared 10th on 284.

Six-time Major winner and three-time Masters champion Mickelson, the oldest Major winner at the age of 50 at the 2021 PGA Championship, birdied five of the last seven holes to shoot 65 – the lowest Masters round ever for a player over 50.

Mickelson had begun the last round 10 off Koepka's pace, giving him a chance to match the greatest last-round comeback in Major history – Paul Lawrie's 1999 British Open rally from 10 adrift.

Mickelson's feat

But the US left-hander Mickelson settled for being the oldest player to finish in the top-five at a Masters, beating the mark set by Jimmy Demaret at age 51.

Top scores: 276: Jon Rahm (Esp — 65, 69, 73, 69); **280:** Phil Mickelson (USA — 71, 69, 75, 65), Brooks Koepka (USA — 65, 67, 73, 75); **281:** Jordan Spieth (USA — 69, 70, 76, 66, Russell Henley (USA — 73, 67, 71, 70), Patrick Reed (USA — 71, 70, 72, 68).

Unfazed: Rahm played an iron-solid and error-free golf. AP

The Rahm file

> I've always been confident when I've been close to the lead. I have full faith in all parts of my game. Maybe because it was difficult out there, I was just focused on what I had to do. And that's really all you can control
> RAHM

2 The Augusta Masters triumph is Rahm's second Major title after the U.S. Open crown in 2021

2 He is the second Spaniard, after Ballesteros, to win more than one Major. Ballesteros won three British Open crowns (1979, 84 & 88) and two Augusta titles (1980 & 83)

4 Rahm is the fourth Spanish golfer to wear the Green Jacket after Ballesteros, Jose Maria Olazabal (1994 & 99) and Sergio Garcia (2017)

How the tide turned

- Koepka began with a four-stroke lead in the final round but Rahm swung back in remarkable fashion
- While the American blew hot and cold (3 birdies, 6 bogeys, 9 pars) in the last 18 holes, the Spaniard was steady and solid (4 birdies, 1 bogey, 13 pars)

INBRIEF

Gukesh wins at World Chess Armageddon Asia & Oceania

Grandmaster D. Gukesh stunned former world rapid champion Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in the final to win the World Chess Armageddon Asia & Oceania event here. Gukesh emerged winner in a topsy-turvy summit clash late on Sunday. After a missed chance in game 1, Gukesh lost the next game against Abdusattorov to use his "extra life" and start the match all over again. The first game of the 'new' match was a draw after a perpetual check from Gukesh. He won the next game to emerge champion.

Vikas secures Greco Roman 72kg bronze in Asian meet

Vikas secured another bronze medal for India in Greco Roman 72kg category at the Asian wrestling championships in Astana on Monday. Vikas beat Kroea's Jiyeon Lee 11-0 before losing 1-6 to Iranian Sajjad Ali. In the bronze medal match, the Indian defeated Chinese wrestler Jian Tan 8-0 to ensure a podium finish.

Mangalore BC claims Rural Basketball League title

Mangalore BC emerged the champion of the Karnataka Rural Basketball League at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday.

The results (final league): Mangalore BC 83 (Rajath 22, Sowkin Shetty 11) bt Aryans BC Mysore 58 (Vijay 17, Deepak 15); Vivekananda BC Mandya 100 (Shashank Raj 22, Raghavendra 13) bt Pinakini BC Gauribidanur 82 (Venugopal 27, Umar 15).
Final placings: 1. Mangalore BC 2. Vivekananda BC Mandya 3. Aryans BC Mysore 4. Pinakini BC Gauribidanur.

South United FC wins BDFA A-division league

South United FC, powered by G. Manigandan's hat-trick, thrashed Income Tax 9-1 in its final match to win the BDFA A-division league championship here on Monday. The win ensured South United was tied on points at the top with HAL FC (31) but the massive margin took its goal difference past HAL's (34 to 31) to give the side the title. Both South United FC and HAL FC are promoted to the BDFA Super Division League.

The scores: BTM FC 2 (Suyash Thomas Koshy 21, Dhruva Sandeep Rao 49) bt Sree Gajanana FC 1 (Cibik Kalaiselvan 77); South United FC 9 (J. Shashidharan 5, 18, Mangminlal Vaiphei 16, G. Manigandan 40, 40+4, 52, Vignesh Srinivas 44, Altab Hussain 47, Sanket Anil Salokhe 62) bt Income Tax FC 1 (Ninish Ganapathy 51); Bangalore Gunners FC 3 (N. Sanjeevi 10, 17, 25) bt Blitz FC 1 (Ritik 65).

Hockey India moves closer to reviving HIL

In what can be seen as the first official step towards revival of the Hockey India League after a six-year hiatus, the federation has announced a new commercial and marketing partner for the same. The federation has finalised Big Bang Media Ventures Pvt. Ltd. as partner in plans for the revival after the Paris Olympics next year. *The Hindu* had first reported this in January with the likes of Adani and JSW among those in talks to own franchises.

LIVE TELECAST

Chess World championship: FIDE & *Chess.com YouTube* channel, 2.30 p.m. onwards
Super Cup football: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5 & 8.30 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

Rinku — hitting all norms for six!

His sequence of sixes puts in the shade a hat-trick and a batting blitz as KKR scores the most runs in the 20th over to win a men's T20

Stealing the limelight: Rinku orchestrated a fine symphony that saw the bells toll for an incredible KKR victory. AFP

IPL-16

Ayan Acharya
AHMEDABAD

It's not often that a T20 hat-trick is overshadowed, or a batting blitzkrieg becomes a subtext. It's rarer still to have these feats in one match and not have any one of them steal the headlines.

But when Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh hit 6, 6, 6, 6, 6 to pull off a three-wicket win against Gujarat Titans, everything else became part of a perfect symphony building to a crescendo.

With 39 needed from eight, Rinku hit Josh Little for a four and six to make it 29 needed from six. Umesh Yadav then took a single off the first ball of the 20th.

Before Sunday, the highest any team had managed in the 20th over to win a men's T20 chase was 26 by Deccan Chargers against KKR in 2009 (target 21). Rinku had 28 to get off the final five balls here.

But Dayal bowled three full tosses and two dragdowns and Rinku zoomed to 48 off 21 while the GT pacer conceded 69 in four overs, the second-most runs conceded by a bowler in an IPL match.

The most telling moment of the day was KKR head coach Chandrakant Pandit hugging Rinku while Dayal slumped on the field.

"Of course, Rinku was there but I didn't believe that it could happen," Venkatesh Iyer later said. But melodrama has become the norm in IPL, with last-over finishes leaving players shellshocked or celebrating ecstatically around outfields.

On Sunday, Rinku delivered a remarkable victory in a match that lurched this way and that. And, in doing so, etched himself into IPL folklore. Need we say "Rinku Singh, remember the name"? Well, he has made sure we do!

Rubina attains Asian Games qualifying mark

INDIAN GP-3

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

On a day when quality performances were at a premium, Rubina Yadav (Haryana) towered over the rest by attaining the women's high jump qualifying mark for the Asian Games in the Indian Grand Prix-3 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Monday.

There was little competition for Rubina after her two rivals Pavaa Nagaraj and S.B. Supriya quit the scene after clearing 1.64m and 1.55m respectively. But the Haryana athlete was unperturbed and did well to clear 1.81m and crossed the Asian Games qualifying mark of 1.80m.

Assam's Amlan Borgohain returned to top-notch competition in style by winning a double. Amlan pipped National record holder Amiya Kumar Mallick at the finish to win the gold in men's 100m in 10.50s and later the Assam athlete blitzed the field to win the 200m easily.

Maharashtra's Tejeas Ashok Shirse also grabbed the attention by clocking a personal best while winning the men's 110m in 13.81s.

Hima Das continued to impress in her comeback as she effortlessly strolled to win the 200m while Kerala's Muhammed Ajmal easily won the 400m gold.

Earlier, a strong headwind spoiled M. Sreeshankar's comeback as the ace long jumper could only manage a modest 7.94m. Sreeshankar, who struggled with his run-up, nailed the gold in his first attempt when he touched 7.83m. After clearing 7.90m in his fourth attempt, Sreeshankar came up with his best effort in his final attempt.

Leap to victory: M. Sreeshankar who won the long jump event on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The results: Men: 100m: 1. Amlan Borgohain (Asm) 10.50s, 2. Amiya Kumar Mallick (Odi) 10.52, 3. Hassan Saaid (Mal) 10.61; **200m:** 1. Amlan Borgohain (Asm) 21.20s, 2. Animesh Kujur (Chts) 21.53, 3. Hassan Saaid (Mal) 21.72; **400m:** 1. Muhammed Ajmal (Ker) 46.63s, 2. W. Nihal Joel (Kar) 47.12, 3. Rahul Ramesh Kadam (Mah) 47.13; **800m:** 1. Ankesh Chaudhary (HP) 1:50.53, 2. Abhishek Singh Thakur (MP) 1:52.08, 3. Tomson Paulose (Ker) 1:52.53; **110m hurdles:** 1. Tejas Ashok Shirse (Mah) 13.81s, 2. Madhvendra Singh Shekhawat (Raj) 13.92, R. Manav (TN) 14.48; **400m hurdles:** Jabir Madari (Ker) 51.61s, 2. Santhosh Kumar (TN) 51.86, Nirmal Yadav (Mah) 52.34; **Long jump:** 1. M. Sreeshankar (Ker) 7.94m, 2. P. David (TN) 7.80, 3. Vishnu Siva Sankar (Del) 7.63; **Discus:** 1. Harpreet Singh (Pun) 54.76m, 2. Vijay Ramajeyam (TN) 48.96,3. Ashwani Lamba (Har) 47.99.

Women: 100m: 1. Archana Suseendran (TN) 11.71s, 2. A.T. Daneshwari (Kar) 11.79,3. Nithya Gandhe (Tel) 11.96; **200m:** 1. Hima Das (Asm) 23.77s, 2. Jyothika (Kar) 24.88, 3. Ziva Moosa Shafeeu (Mal) 26.84; **400m:** 1. Aishwarya Mishra (Mah) 53.63s, 2. Kiran Pahal (Har) 55.32, 3. V.K. Vismaya (Ker) 55.37; **800m:** 1. G.K. Vijayakumari (Kar) 2:09.70s, 2. K.M. Deeksha (MP) 2:10.95; 3. Bhagyalaxmi (Tel) 2:15.40; **100m hurdles:** 1. Jyothi Yarraji (AP) 13.44s, 2. Sapna Kumari (Jkd) 13.85, 3. Agasara Nandini (Tel) 13.85.

Triple jump: 1. K.M. Sonam (UP) 13.50m, 2. Karthika Gothandapani (AP) 13.11, 3. Mallala Anusha (AP) 12.77; **High jump:** 1. Rubina Yadav (Har) 1.81m, 2. Pavaa Nagaraj (Kar) 1.64, 3. S.B. Supriya (Kar) 1.55; **Discus:** 1. Annu (Har) 44.67m, 2. Priyadarshini Moyappan (TN) 40.583. Anagha Lakshmi Kurra (AP) 32.88.

Bayern and Tuchel threaten Man City's dream once more

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Manchester City and Pep Guardiola have a Champions League score to settle against Thomas Tuchel, when the newly-appointed Bayern Munich boss visits the Etihad in Tuesday's quarterfinal, first leg.

Tuchel emerged victorious as Chelsea manager in City's first, and so far only, run to the final in 2021.

That was also the closest Guardiola has come in 10 tries during spells at Barcelona, Bayern and City to land his third European Cup as a coach.

Tuchel now has the challenge of succeeding where Guardiola failed in leading Bayern back to Champions League glory.

But the weight of expectation falls much more heavily on the City boss.

In his seventh season in Manchester, Guardiola is in the running for his fifth Premier League title.

Yet the failure to get over the line in Europe remains a blot on his copybook.

In the day's other game, Inter Milan and Benfica will meet having to rebound from recent setbacks. Inter hasn't won in more than a month while Benfica is coming off a tough loss to its biggest rival.

The fixtures: Benfica vs Inter Milan, Manchester City vs Bayern Munich (12.30 a.m., Wednesday).

Colaco on the prowl as ATK MB powers past Gokulam Kerala

SUPER CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOZHIKODE

Liston Colaco scored only once in the ISL this season. But on Monday, within a space of 21 minutes, he scored twice – and lovely goals both – to power the recently-crowned ISL champion ATK Mohun Bagan to a thumping 5-1 victory against Gokulam Kerala in the Super Cup football tournament.

The ATK MB team management must be pleased not just with the result but the way one of its main players got back amongst the goals. Colaco's first goal resulted from a shoddy piece of defending by Abdul Hakku.

The pass from Hugo Boumous was put firmly into the roof of the net by Colaco from just inside the box.

His second goal came off a stunning long-ranger, after receiving a splendid long ball, from ATK MB's own half, by Ashish Rai. Then, at the stroke of half-time, Boumos made it 3-0, as he beat the Gokulam defence and goalkeeper after receiving a through ball from Nassiri.

Nassiri himself struck in injury time, but before him, Manvir Singh had scored, off an assist from Boumos.

Gokulam's lone goal came from a header by Sergio Mendigutxia. The host was outplayed by a clearly superior side.

Later, Jamshedpur FC defeated defending champion Goa FC 5-3. The winner led 3-1 at half-time.

Two-goal hero: Colaco, who scored a brace, in action against Gokulam Kerala. K. RAGESH

Colaco's strikes in the sixth and 27th minutes helped the Kolkata side seize the initiative
Boumous, Manvir and Nassiri completed the tally for ATK
Crivellaro's brace proved the highlight of Jamshedpur FC's win over FC Goa

The results:
ATK Mohun Bagan 5 (Liston Colaco 6 & 27, Hugo Boumous 45, Manvir Singh 63, Kiyan Nassiri 90+4) bt Gokulam Kerala 1 (Sergio Mendigutxia 71).
Jamshedpur FC 5 (Pratik Chowdhary 11, Rafael Crivellaro 27 &59, Fares Al Arnaout 45+4-og, Harry Sawyer 82) bt FC Goa 3 (Noah Sadaoui 7 & 70, Iker Guarrotxena 62).

Atletico beats Rayo

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
BARCELONA

Atletico Madrid cut the gap on second place Real Madrid to just two points with a 2-1 win over 10-man Rayo Vallecano on Sunday in LaLiga. Valencia fell to a damaging 2-1 loss at Almeria.

The results: LaLiga: Real Valladolid 3 (Perez 33, Amallah 68, Monchu 86) lost to Real Mallorca 3 (Muriqi 53, 90+4-pen, Morlanes 58); Real Betis 0 lost to Cadiz 2 (Alcaraz 53-pen, Ramos 59); Almeria 2 (Melero 49, Babic 58) bt Valencia 1 (Castillejo 61); Rayo Vallecano 1 (Fran Garcia 85) lost to Atletico Madrid 2 (Molina 22, Hermoso 24).

Bundesliga: Borussia M'Gladbach 2 (Ngoumou, Thuram 63) bt Wolfsburg 0.

Bopanna has words of encouragement and advice for youngsters Vihaan and Rethin

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Rohan Bopanna is busy on the professional tour, but still keeps an eye on the bright juniors in the country. His focus is not limited to those training at his academy like Kandhavel Mahalingam or Rethin Pranav Senthilkumar.

The World No. 13 doubles star was particularly pleased to spend time with 13-year-old Vihaan Reddy during his stay at home in Bengaluru, before leaving for Europe.

Vihaan won 21 singles matches straight during his debut series in the ITF under-18 circuit, for his four titles on the trot in Gurugram, Dehra Dun, Bhilai and Madurai. He capped the fine run by winning the doubles title as well, when he was drained of all energy in the hot humid conditions of Madurai.

"Vihaan has a very strong mind. To be that consistent against players of different ages, height and in different conditions, is never easy at any level. He has to get out of his comfort zone and start training in a good academy with players of higher level. He needs to have a strength and conditioning coach to get physically stronger," observed Bopanna.

After his meeting with Vihaan, Bopanna had a good chat with Rethin Pranav's father, about the way forward for the boy, who missed selection for Junior Davis Cup by six points.

"Rethin is extremely promising. He was supposed to go to the Australian Open but didn't go. He missed two and a half months for studies. That is too long a period to miss tennis. We should have clarity on priority.

"If he wants to go to the best University, we can help him. But if the focus is on tennis, we cannot think too far ahead. Since he is not having the stamina, as he has been losing from winning position, I have asked him to run three kilometres every day. It should be easy for a 15-year-old. Between me and coach M. Balachandran, we do plan the best path for the youngsters, but if it is not followed, it is hard to help the player," said Bopanna.

Having gone through the tough grind for years during his formative years, Bopanna said that he could develop into such a strong player mainly because his parents had faith in the coaches and never interfered with the tennis.

Mentor: Bopanna was particularly pleased to spend time with Vihaan Reddy before leaving for Europe. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT